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Issue 300

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- Around the House: Phil Davy's guide to making your own picture frames
- Solutions: keeping your workshop warm this winter



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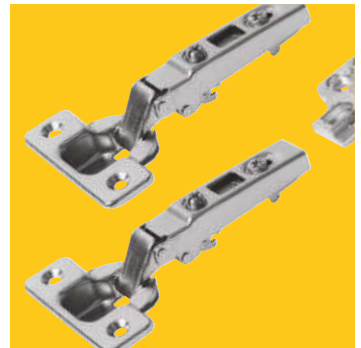
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GW's 300th issue – definitely reason to celebrate!

# Welcome

Hello and welcome to our **300th issue!** Can this really be happening?! Apparently so! I must say that I feel very honoured to be part of such a wonderful team and have the privilege of working with so many great people each month in putting together a magazine that is so well loved by its readers (and by us!) A massive thank you must go out to everyone who has continued to support the magazine over the years – we couldn't have done this without you.

To show our gratitude we've given over an extra 10 pages of fantastic content for you to enjoy, making issue 300 a bumper edition at 100 pages long! The stars of the show this month have to be the finalists and of course, the winner, of this year's Shed of the Year competition, **p31**. We bring you an exclusive interview with founder Andrew Wilcox, **p32**, and give you a glimpse into these amazing sheds and the people behind them, before announcing the overall winner, Walter Micklethwait, **p47** (pictured above). Prepare to be amazed and get ready to become shed-obsessed!

We also have a brand-new series from woodworking and furniture-making guru John Bullar, **p24**, whose 12-part series will take you through the steps for setting up a workshop and choosing the best tools for the jobs in hand. Michael Huntley also starts his new series on Japanese joinery and reports from one of his recent masterclasses, **p53**.

Mike Warren shows us a great table project for using up offcuts, **p60**, we have a lovely festive tea-light holder design, **p60**, and while we're on the festive theme, Les Thorne shows you how to make three fun Christmas tree decorations, **p80**.

Phil Davy looks at picture framing in 'Around the House', **p69**, Barrie Scott investigates how wooden sailing ships are being rebuilt in Normandy, **p88**, and Andy King thinks the DeWalt DCN660 2nd Fix Nailer is the best thing since sliced bread, **p16**. Enjoy!

**Tegan Foley, Editor**



**Tegan Foley**  
Editor



**Andy King**  
Technical Editor



**Dave Roberts**  
Consultant Editor



**Phil Davy**  
Consultant Editor

*We endeavour to ensure all techniques shown in Good Woodworking are safe, but take no responsibility for readers' actions. Take care when woodworking and always use guards, goggles, masks, hold-down devices and ear protection, and above all, plenty of common sense. Do remember to enjoy yourself, though.*

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# Good Woodworking

December 2015

Tools • Projects • Techniques • Advice



## On the cover

31  
Shed of the Year 2015 competition winners

17 pages of the most unique sheds you'll ever see, plus the ultimate champion!

## Start furniture making 24

Pro furniture maker John Bullar kicks off his new series by looking at workshop set-up and reveals his top tips for getting it right from the start

## Waste not, want not 60

Do you have some offcuts and scraps lying around the workshop? Mike Warren shows you a great way of using them up and making them into something spectacular with this fantastic table



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### Getting scrappy! 60

Mike Warren shows you how to build this attractive and highly effective table using pieces of scrap wood

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Simple and seasonal, Phil Davy's great little Christmas idea is a beautiful candleholder

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Michael Huntley tells us about the Japanese carpentry masterclass he ran earlier this year

### Warm workshops 85

Gemma Hunt suggests a number of ways in which you can keep your workshop warm this winter and shows you a number of woodburning stoves, all perfect for the job

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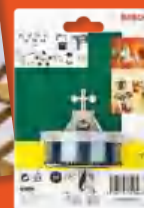
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## DeWalt DCN660 2nd Fix Nailer

Gets the full five stars 16

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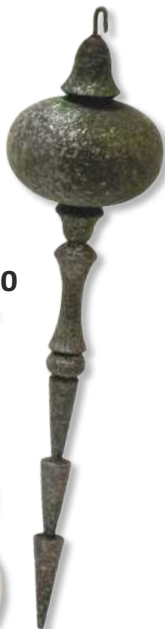
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Clarke CON750#	750W	80/10mm	£24.98	£29.98
Bosch PST700E*	500W	70/4mm	£44.99	£53.99
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# Good Woodworking News

from the bench

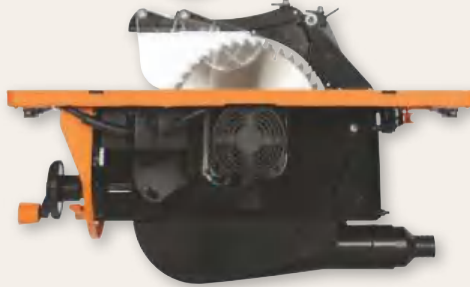
Comment, insight, views and news of woodworkers from around the globe

## The heart of the mobile workshop



At the heart of every workshop is the workbench, and if you're serious about woodworking then a table saw is fairly high on the list thereafter. So with the launch of the new Triton Workcentre it makes perfect sense that one of the first fast switch-out modules for the system should be a highly featured table saw.

The key concept of the TWX7 Workcentre is that every module operates as well as its standalone counterpart and in this respect the TWX7CS001 Contractor Saw module does not disappoint. This no-compromise contractor saw provides a versatile yet highly mobile table saw with premium cast



aluminium table and a highly accurate dual locking point fence. The blade has both height and angle adjustment from a simple-to-use dial located at the front of the unit, so precision cuts up to 86mm and bevel angles to



45° can be assured. Fully enclosed guarding above and below the table not only ensures operator safety but provides very efficient dual dust extraction points. The TWX7CS001 Contractor Saw module is also supplied with a protractor guide that runs in the T-track rails on the Workcentre surface; combined with the bevel cut of the saw this enables compound precision mitre cuts to be made to meet complex requirements. Priced at £322.80, see [www.tritontools.com](http://www.tritontools.com).



## New dust separator from Axminster

Dust separators work by being connected between the machine and extractor. This dust separator has a capacity of 110l so is considerably bigger than most small extractors. It can even be used on machines that create fine dust when the extractor would not normally be suitable for this type of machine.

Made of sheet steel and fitted with castors, this is a sturdy unit. It has 63mm inlet and

outlet fixtures, and is best suited for use with a vacuum extractor, such as the Axminster Trade NV750. Steel clips hold the lid on and a partial vacuum is created between the waste bag and the inside of the drum to ensure complete filling. A handy window shows when it is full. A well-made and useful machine with some assembly required. Priced at £129.96 (valid until 31 December 2015), see [www.axminster.co.uk](http://www.axminster.co.uk) for more info.







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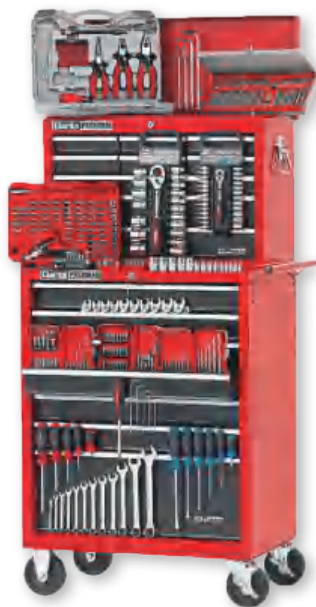
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\*Ex VAT

## Keep tools tidy with Clarke tool chests & cabinets

These professional quality, heavy-duty tool chests and cabinets are ideal for storing your hand and power tools. Many of the cabinets in the range feature 125mm chrome spoked wheels as well as an extra-large side handle for easy movement and aluminium pull handles. Each drawer is supplied with a protective anti-slip liner and feature ball-bearing drawer runners for super smooth sliding action. Each cabinet is designed with a foot brake and a special push-lock feature prevents drawers from opening accidentally or when the unit is tilted – all drawers will lock simultaneously when the top lid is closed. If extra storage is needed, a three drawer step-up modular unit can be added as well as side lockers. With a range of drawer combinations and a maximum load of up to 43kg per drawer, the Clarke HD Plus range starts from only £119.98. Models are available in a range of colours including, Blue Line Industrial, Black and Gold as well as Clarke Contractor Yellow. See [www.machinemart.co.uk](http://www.machinemart.co.uk) for the full range.



## Hitachi brushless rotary hammer series



Hitachi Power Tools has launched their AC Brushless Motor Rotary Hammer series for drilling larger holes – all with maintenance-free brushless motors and an optimised hammer mechanism for the fastest drilling speeds and highest demolition performance in their class.

The DH40MEY, DH45ME and DH52ME Rotary Demolition Hammers have advanced features designed to reduce maintenance and increase durability. Constant speed control technology makes sure no demolition power is lost under load, and the continuous operation function keeps the tools running even when the trigger has been released, making for easier chiselling. Drill bits can be mounted with a single push, the variable-speed control can be changed at the touch of a button and the large trigger and mode select switch are easily accessible.

With Hitachi's three-year warranty also available when registered online within four weeks of purchase, trade professionals can be assured of long service and peace of mind. Prices start from £739.20, see [www.hitachi-powertools.co.uk](http://www.hitachi-powertools.co.uk).

## New pen turning products from Charnwood



Charnwood has recently introduced a new range of pen turning products to their range, which includes 20 colourful acrylic blanks measuring 19mm diameter x 130mm long. Being already round cuts down on turning time and also eliminates any chippings coming off. There are also two Camo

acrylic banks and 12 coloured wood blanks, each measuring 20 x 20 x 130mm. The pen collection starts with the standard 7mm slimline twist pens, which are available in gold, gun metal, chrome, copper and black chrome and come complete with matching click pencils, all available in the same colours.

For the more adventurous turner, there are chunky cigar pens in gold and black, gold and gun metal, chrome and black and gun metal and black, with cigar pencils available in gold and black and chrome and black. Also in the range are the popular Sierra pens available in the same colour ranges. A selection of mini key chain pens in various colours and two Christmas tree decorations finish the range in gold and chrome. For more info, see [www.charnwood.net](http://www.charnwood.net).

## Done & dusted

Hilti has extended its range of harmonised Dust Removal Systems (DRS) with the launch of the TE DRS-4-A, an integrated attachment for the popular TE 4-A22 Cordless rotary hammer.

Removing dust directly while drilling, the new product is both ergonomically designed and lightweight – weighing just 1kg – meaning it can be used comfortably overhead and for long periods. The attachment is powered entirely by the rotary hammer's 22V battery, so no separate power source is required.

The Hilti DRS portfolio ensures a cleaner, healthier and more productive working environment, as well as keeping tools and inserts cleaner and sharper, which in turn reduces downtime.

The TE DRS-4-A is the latest product in the extensive Hilti range of harmonised DRS systems, whereby the tool, consumable, accessory and M-Class vacuum are designed to work together to remove the maximum amount of dust at the point of contact.

Both the TE 4-A22 Cordless rotary hammer and the TE DRS-4-A attachment are available on the Hilti Fleet Management programme whereby a fixed monthly charge covers all tool, service and repair costs over 36 months. For customers who prefer to own their own products outright, Hilti's Lifetime Service gives a two year no-cost period, which includes the same high level of cover.

For more info and to watch a video of the tools in action, see [www.hilti.co.uk/drs-4a](http://www.hilti.co.uk/drs-4a).





## D&M Tools' most successful annual show ever!

D&M Tools of Twickenham would like to send out a huge thank you to all the exhibitors and visitors who attended their 15th annual show in October and helped to make it the best to date.

Visitors flocked from all over the UK to attend the exhibition of hand tools, power tools and woodworking machinery at Kempton Park Racecourse in Sunbury-on-Thames, which took place over the weekend of 9-11 October.

This free event is frequently cited as the highlight of the woodworking calendar with probably the largest display of tools and accessories from all the leading brands. Visitors eagerly anticipate the opportunity to get their hands on the latest products, try out the kit, compare various brands and talk to the experts before taking advantage of the exclusive show deals and special offers.

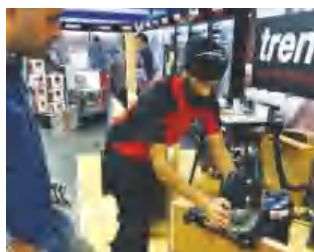
New exhibitors this year included Milwaukee with their 'Big Red' demonstrator lorry appearing as part of their UK tour. The wonderful weather allowed visitors to enjoy the numerous outdoor displays as well as the two floors of indoor exhibition space.

Woodworking experts including Andy King, Tibby Singh (BBC Young Carpenter of the Year who will also be appearing in *GW* in a few issues' time), Julian Collins and 'The Gentleman Joiner' Christopher Hall, were demonstrating and providing masterclasses throughout the weekend.

Make a date now for next year's show, which will take place from 7-9 October 2016. More details can be found on the dedicated show website: [www.thetoolshow.com](http://www.thetoolshow.com).



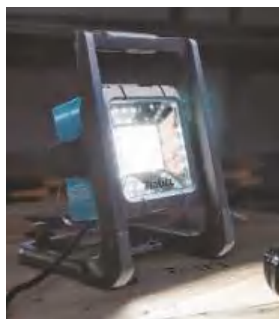
Our own Andy King chatting to visitors and manning the Makita stand



Tibby Singh, BBC Young Carpenter of the Year

## Makita LED work-light

Makita has recently added a rugged site work-light to their range, which can be powered by mains or using Makita's high performance Li-ion batteries. The 20 0.5W LEDs provide a bright and even light and there is a full beam and low level setting on the simple push button control. The light unit is mounted in a rugged moulded carry cradle with flat base and top handle that can serve as a hanging bar. A simple rotating knob releases the angle setting, which can spin through 360°. Ideal for site operations this work-light features Makita Extreme Protection Technology, XPT, which protects against water and dust ingress. It has three tripod mounting options as standard. Using a 4.0Ah 18V Makita Li-ion battery the DML805 LED work-light has a continuous run time in high setting of 6.5 hours. Priced at £117, see [www.makitauk.com](http://www.makitauk.com) for more info.



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Christmas is nearly here, so what better excuse than to head out and learn some new skills, just in time for the new year!

## December

**4-7 The apprentice's dovetailed box**  
**17 & 18 Woodturning – make a small bowl**  
**18-20 Woodturning – bowls with texture**

West Dean College  
 West Dean, near Chichester  
 West Sussex PO18 0QZ  
**Tel:** 01243 811 301  
**Web:** [www.westdean.org.uk](http://www.westdean.org.uk)

**8 Pyrography – Ben Beddows**

**11 Sharpening with Tormek \***

**12 Scrollsaw course \***

**16 Festool demo day \***

\* Course held in Sittingbourne, Kent  
 Axminster Tools & Machinery  
 Unit 10 Weycroft Avenue, Axminster  
 Devon EX13 5PH

**Tel:** 08009 751 905

**Web:** [www.axminster.co.uk](http://www.axminster.co.uk)

**7-11 Beginners furniture making (5 days)**

**14-16 Wood machining**

Peter Sefton Furniture School  
 The Threshing Barn, Welland Road  
 Upton Upon Severn, Worcester  
 Worcestershire WR8 0SN

**Web:** [www.peterseftonfurnitureschool.com](http://www.peterseftonfurnitureschool.com)

## January

**15-17 Green wood spoon carving**

**15-18 Beginners' simple furniture**

**22-25 Woodturning bowls with wet & seasoned wood**

**26 Woodturning – make a small bowl**

**30 Woodcarving – a hand bowl**

**31-5 Ladderback chair making**

**31-5 Traditional upholstery techniques**

West Dean College  
 West Dean, near Chichester  
 West Sussex PO18 0QZ

**Tel:** 01243 811 301

**Web:** [www.westdean.org.uk](http://www.westdean.org.uk)

**9 Introduction to Leigh Jigs \***

**11-12 & 21-22 Intro to the small lathe**

**11-12 \* 18-22 Beginners' woodturning**

**12 Turning a pestle & mortar \***

**14 Pyrography – Ben Beddows**

**18-19 & 28-29 Beginners routing**

**20 Scrollsaws**

**22 Bandsaws**

**22 Sharpening with Tormek hand tools**

**26 Fine-tuning hand planes**

**28 Pen making \***

**29 Woodturning refresher**

**30 Spindle moulding \***

\* Course held in Sittingbourne, Kent  
 Axminster Tools & Machinery  
 Unit 10 Weycroft Avenue, Axminster  
 Devon EX13 5PH

**Tel:** 08009 751 905

**Web:** [www.axminster.co.uk](http://www.axminster.co.uk)

## Ready-to-buy furniture online

Yorkshire furniture design firm Dovetailors has launched a new website to sell its latest range of ready-to-buy furniture online. The company, which designs and manufactures all its own products at Sunny Bank Mill in Leeds, has developed a capsule collection of furniture and shelving that can be ordered direct from anywhere in the UK.

Creative Director David Wilson said the move followed a complete overhaul of the company's manufacturing processes to create a standard range of products that could be produced in small batches alongside the business' bespoke work. "It was very important to us that we maintained the profile of our bespoke work alongside our e-commerce business," said David. "What's really unique about our online offering is that it gives people the option to buy something exactly as they see it on the website or contact us to enquire about adapting it to



One of Dovetailors' ready-to-buy pieces of furniture

their own tastes and requirements."

The new site also showcases the firm's ecclesiastical and commercial work, which David says is a growing part of the business. "We have completed a number of projects for Wakefield Cathedral and Sheffield Cathedral and we have an incredible amount of expertise in heritage and ecclesiastical work," he tells us. "We are also involved in some exciting projects with commercial product developers who team up with us to help them create prototypes and small batches during the design process."

To see the new website for yourselves, visit [www.dovetailors.co.uk](http://www.dovetailors.co.uk).



Mike Warren will be showing you how to fill voids with photoluminescent powder in a future issue

## Glow tables

'How on earth do they do that?' I can hear you saying. Well, the secret is out, thanks to industrial designer Mat Brown, who recently shared his method for creating wood shelves inlaid with glow-in-the-dark resin. Mike Warren (see his scrap ends table on page 60) then decided to release a tutorial showing how to fill the naturally formed voids in pecky cypress with photoluminescent powder mixed with clear casting resin. The effect is pretty amazing. We will be featuring the project in a few issues' time, but in the meantime, you can read through Mike's step-by-step instructions here: [www.instructables.com/id/Glow-table](http://www.instructables.com/id/Glow-table).

## Duchy Timber

Duchy Timber ([www.duchytimber.co.uk](http://www.duchytimber.co.uk)) sources local wood and produces garden furniture, gates, fencing and more at its sawmill in Cornwall. Founded in 1958 as part of the Duchy of Cornwall estate, it is now privately owned and has recently become part of the Premier Forest Group. In recent years it has grown to become a state-of-the-art site, with a computer-controlled sawmill, timber drying kilns, a pressure treatment plant and extensive machining facilities.

The company strongly believes in sustainability, hence the wood they use is sourced from within 50 miles of the sawmill in Lostwithiel and all processes are carried out on one site to reduce log miles. They also deal in a range of imported timber products from Scandinavia and further afield, which allows them to offer a true one-stop shop.

For every tree used, the company plants three more. It is FSC® certified and uses wood sourced only from sustainably managed forests. Each product uses three times more wood than average to ensure quality, durability and longevity.



Duchy Timber's gold badge signifies quality and sustainably produced products

# OFFCUTS

## Paul Sellers' woodworking masterclass

Woodworking Masterclasses is the website for Paul Sellers, who teaches internet-based hand tool instruction. You can register for a free membership that allows you access to a number of videos and the first one, or two, of each project. Paid membership, of approximately £10 per month, gives you access to all of the projects on the site. Each project introduces new joints and/or hand tools. Paul Sellers does not try to sell you any brand-new tools; he specifically steers you towards second-hand ones from eBay. See [woodworkingmasterclasses.com](http://woodworkingmasterclasses.com) to find out more.



## Rustic stool making workshop

Come along to New Caledonian Woodlands, an Edinburgh-based charity and environmental enterprise on 5 December for this two-day course introducing you to the processes involved with green woodcarving and rustic furniture making.

Using basic tools, you will make a stool to show off at home. New Caledonian Woodlands will provide all the materials and show you techniques for working with green and seasoned wood. All you need to do is bring yourself and some warm clothing. You will be provided with expert guidance, hot lunch, teas, coffees and of course, biscuits. See [www.craftscotland.org](http://www.craftscotland.org).

## The Wood Green Christmas Fair

Head out and visit Oakleigh Fairs' Christmas Crafts at Wood Green event from 12-13 December in Cambridgeshire. Whatever the weather, you can visit the indoor arena and sample and buy from a wide range of arts, craft and gift stalls where you might find anything from jewellery and other accessories, handicrafts, hand-made cards, photography, candles, aromatherapy products, through to ceramics and a range of turned items. Food and drink will include wine, real food as well as chocolates and other confectionery. See [www.oakleighfairs.co.uk](http://www.oakleighfairs.co.uk) for more info.



# Good Woodworking Free Reader Ads

## Machinery

**Delta wood lathe:** 863mm between centres, dial-up speed from 500-20,00rpm, fully rotating headstock and steel stand; £150 OVNO  
☎ 01202 892 902 (Dorset)

**Record CLI lathe:** four-speed belt change, bowl turning attachment, 914m between centres, solid bed bars, 3/4 x 16tpi, 1MT. Includes Teknatool Supernova Chuck, 3/4 x 16tpi, two sets of jaws, woodworm screw and Multistar micro chuck, 3/4 x 16tpi. Very good condition; £275 + P&P – can be collected  
☎ 01482 706 283 (E. Yorkshire)

**Hammer C3-31 woodworking machine** and attachments. Excellent condition, hobby use only, single phase includes table saw, thickness planer and spindle moulder; £3,250 ☎ 07714 767 505 (Glasgow)

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**Leigh Dovetail jig Super 18.** Very little DIY use only. VRS router support and chip collector, unused; £350 + P&P, or can be collected ☎ 01482 706 283 (E. Yorkshire)

**Leigh FMT jig Pro model.** Very little DIY use only. £350 + P&P, or can be collected ☎ 01482 706 283 (E. Yorkshire)

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Andy King

# Good Woodworking Kit & Tools

## New products, tools and tests

Andy King, Technical Editor  
andy.king@mytimemedia.com

# Charging is but a cradle away

Is the Bosch Wireless Charging System ahead of its time? Ideally suited to bench use and assembly work, the technology holds great promise for the future



▲ As long as the tool or battery sits central to the charger, it will continue to charge

**T**he race among manufacturers for the most powerful Li-ion batteries has taken a side step in the Bosch camp and moved into a whole new area. Instead of the higher Amp Hour batteries designed for long run times to minimise down times, this latest innovation is almost a step back in time to the very first drills where they sat on a trickle charge cradle.

### How does it work?

This wireless system from Bosch is poles apart from this and indeed, it relies on induction poles to do its magic, a primary coil in the charging base and the secondary one in the battery itself. When these are placed in close proximity to each other the charging cycle begins, transferring the energy from the base station to the battery. Clever stuff. But where does it fit in the scheme of things for us woodworkers? The tools themselves remain identical to the current Bosch Li-ion range; any tools that take the 18V batteries are fully

compatible so you can upgrade existing kit by purchasing a charging base and a battery.

### The benefits

So what are the benefits of having a battery always fitted? In principle, over time the constant swapping of batteries to recharge them will cause wear and tear and damage to terminals both on the tool and the battery, which is handily eliminated here.

In the workshop, keep the charger on the bench and simply place the tool directly on the charging plate, where it will continue to top up. The charger also has a cradle that will lock around the battery for tools that won't sit on the battery in a stable manner, sliding into the cradle to hold it in the correct position.

For on-site work, there is also a cradle and other options that can be connected up to your vehicle wiring system via the cigarette lighter socket, to charge the tools as you go and to provide a trickle charge as needed. However, despite the pluses the system has,

# Bosch wireless charging system



▲ Sit the battery offcentre and the charger shows a red light to indicate that it needs repositioning



▲ The blue outer cradle allows the battery to slide in and be held securely



▲ The cradle can be screwed down to secure the charger



▲ This allows top heavy tools such as this jigsaw to sit on the charger



▲ Flat-pack assembly is a great application for the drill, charging while parts are positioned...



▲ ...and easily in reach for driving in the fixings as needed

for me, it isn't really a site-friendly system just yet; you still need power to connect the charger and this has to be where you're working, which isn't always available on-site. Alternatively, despite a few current 'on the van' charging options now available, there may be a need for a secondary source on your vehicle if it isn't going to drain the main battery if the engine isn't running.



▲ The batteries have the same identical power indicator as the standard type

## Workshop drilling

Alongside this, high drain applications will soon deplete a battery, so it negates the benefit of constant charging in such situations as it will not keep up with demand.

There are 4Ah batteries now using this wireless platform but if pushed hard, these will still get their power consumed too quickly to replenish sufficiently fast enough.

However, I have to say that the 2Ah batteries supplied do take a charge very quickly. Taking a brand new battery and checking the charge state it showed one light and within 20 minutes of cradle charging, it was fully charged. So while this system has good grounding and does work very well indeed, for me, the jury's out at the moment.

Its real suitability is in areas where drilling and driving applications are commonplace, but in a workshop rather than a site situation where power sources can often be remote. However, the docking station for a vehicle will

certainly be beneficial if it won't impact on the vehicle's needs in such situations.

## Conclusion

I think this technology is ideally suited for bench use and assembly work where it can be used regularly throughout the day but in an intermittent manner, which will allow it to work its magic on the cradle where it picks up the charge as soon as it's placed on its base when not in use. But of course, you have to get in the habit of remembering to put it on the cradle every time you put it down! **GW**

## Good The Woodworking Verdict

- + Battery constantly charges on the cradle; works especially well in the workshop
- A power supply is still needed on-site; vehicle charging ideally suited when engine is running

**Rating** ★★★★★

**Typical price:** Charging cradle plus 1 x 2Ah battery – **£99**;

GSB18VLI2W (2 x 2Ah battery, cradle & GSB18V drill) – **£199**

**Battery:** 2Ah wireless (4Ah also available)

**Charge time:** 45mins (2Ah)

**Battery voltage:** 18V

**Web:** www.bosch.co.uk

## Prices

Our product prices reflect typical values as we go to press. We cannot guarantee these prices, though, and thoroughly recommend that you shop around.

## How we rate...

- ★ Don't get your hopes up or your wallet out!
- ★★ Well, it works but really needs improvement
- ★★★ Performs well, but you will find better
- ★★★★ Great performance and value for money
- ★★★★★ So good, even Andy would get his wallet out!

# Consistent, simple & powerful

Could this new nailer be the best thing since sliced bread? Well, yes! Gone are the days of gas-powered nailers; say hello to the DCN660!



**1**0 years ago, way back in issue 156 when I reviewed the DeWalt DC618 2nd Fix Nailer, it was a tool that blew me away with its ability to not only keep up with, but to outfire its gas powered rivals. Since then, a couple of years back, DeWalt topped this feat by harnessing the power of Li-ion batteries as well as the new brushless motor technology to release a gun that fired 90mm first fix nails; a truly spectacular achievement, so it makes sense for them to go full circle and bring the old NiCd-driven DC618 up to spec – enter the DCN660!

## Awe-inspiring

Now looking a lot sleeker than the original, it's still quite a heavy tool, but lighter than its predecessor, and while it's fully compatible with all the current DeWalt 18V Li-ion slide-on batteries, you can buy it as a body only, or as a kit with 2Ah batteries, and this particular



▲ This switch resets the driving blade if the gun stalls when a jam occurs

battery will keep the weight down that little bit more, which is a definite bonus.

While 2.0Ah sounds quite paltry by today's standards, especially on an 18V platform, this gun will fire around 800 nails on one battery at this 2Ah capacity. This is something I put to the test by second fixing a four bedroom house for a builder friend, fixing architraves and doorstops to 16 linings and also pinning the skirtings to the stud framework, using a combination of 63mm and 50mm nails, all completed using just one 2Ah battery.

I was very impressed by the DCN660's performance and felt I was in no danger of being caught short for power here, either from the battery draining quickly nor the gun itself lacking power.

The nature of cutting to size then pinning each component ensures that a full day's power off just one battery is well within the realms of possibility, and in fact, from my own findings and its ability to cope with everything I asked of it, an absolute reality. I am still in awe of just how good this gun is!



# DeWalt DCN660 2nd Fix Nailer



▲ A second switch alters the tool from sequential to bump mode



▲ LEDs illuminate the work area and also diagnose basic problems



▲ Depth of drive is set with this dial, reading the position on the nose indicator



▲ Second fix work is where this gun excels, setting each fixing consistently

## User-friendly

It is also very user-friendly when you do hit a snag. All guns will suffer from a jammed fixing on the odd occasion where it comes up against something hard that prevents it from firing home and sticking in the gun. An easily operated quick-release nose toggle allows you to gain quick access to the problem area, where you are then able to remove any obstruction. Alongside this there's also a switch, which allows you to reset the firing blade if it stalls when encountering a jam.

A couple of LEDs are positioned just above the battery slide to aid illumination of the work area as well as diagnosing a fault, such as a stall or a depleted battery, so it's quick to spot any potential problems.

## Bump & sequential modes

In all this, I think the most impressive part of the gun has to be the bump or sequential mode. A slider toggles between the modes, with the sequential mode preferred for accurately setting a fixing. You position the gun, depress the nose and fire, with each fixing fired in the same way.

Bump mode overrides the need to pull the trigger for each fixing; by keeping the trigger

pulled in and bouncing the gun on the work, it will fire as quickly as four nails per second. It's worth putting it in this mode as a party trick, just to show people how good it is!

Equal to the original second fix gun in this area, I filled the DCN660 with 63mm nails and bumped it along a piece of timber as fast as I could and each nail was fired fully and consistently home. If you do encounter a different density of stock, sheet materials, hardwoods, etc. then there's a depth of drive adjuster at the nose that simply winds in and out to alter the depth of drive.

## Goodbye to gas

Alongside their first fix gun, DeWalt certainly hold the nap hand now. Gone are the days of struggling with gas-powered guns, as are the additional costs involved, including the gas itself as well as the regular maintenance required to keep them functioning.

The combination of the angled nail feed and the 310mm overall length also allows the gun to get into some pretty tight spots so I guess the only negative has to be the weight, but just touching the 3kg mark with a 2.0Ah battery means it weighs little more than a heavy-duty combi drill.

## Conclusion

So do DeWalt now have the best thing since sliced bread? Well, I think so! If you are on the hunt for a consistent, simple and powerful second fix nailer, I'd certainly advise you to use your loaf and have a very close look at the DCN660 – it's definitely a five star performer for me. [GW](#)

## The <sup>Good</sup> Woodworking Verdict

+ Battery only; bump mode; good tool jam access and reset

– A tad heavy

**Rating** ★★★★★

**Typical price:** £430 with 2 × 2.0Ah batteries

**Voltage:** 18V

**Battery:** 2.0Ah

**Nail diameter:** 1.6mm (16Ga)

**Nail length:** 32-63mm

**Magazine capacity:** 110 nails

**Length:** 310mm

**Width:** 95mm

**Height:** 305mm

**Weight:** 2.65kg

**Operating mode:** bump and sequential

**Web:** [www.dewalt.co.uk](http://www.dewalt.co.uk)

# Sanding by numbers

If you're looking for that high gloss, mirror finish on your turned pens, this new product could be just the ticket

Initially designed for use in the model making arena, this range of abrasives from Albion Hobbies will find equal usefulness in the woodworking world, and with a diverse range, there's an option available for a variety of applications.

## High gloss finish

Having just recently commented on the wet and dry MicroMesh pads and the tip of writing numbers on them to indicate the grits, Albion have taken the simple but effective step of printing the grit onto each of their Micro pads.

The set comprises of pads in varying shades of grey, so you can actually determine each by working through them in shade order. The grit indications are logical and allow you to quickly identify the last shade used if you lose track.

This set of six pads range from 3,200 through to 12,000 grit and work brilliantly



▲ The sheet abrasives are great for sanding out any lighter tool marks and can be used wet or dry

when used wet for polishing up acrylics and although there's only six of them, they allow you to achieve the same high gloss on acrylics as the nine-piece MicroMesh ones. Having used them to polish up a few acrylic turning kits, they are proving equally as durable and allow you to achieve the same finish.

## Wet or dry

Alongside these is a set of nine abrasive cloths measuring 110 x 75mm with a grit range of 1,500 to 12,000. These come with a double density flexible foam backing pad to support the abrasive on work that perhaps requires a softer, contoured sand.

Again, these work brilliantly when wet, but are equally at home in a dry application, put to use on yet another turning project!



▲ Using the pads wet gives acrylics a high gloss – great for woodturning projects



▲ Each pad has its grit printed on for quick recognition



▲ Likewise, the cloths are printed with grits as well as a different colour for each



This particular kit is perhaps a tad expensive for what is essentially two or three sheets of wet and dry in total, but they seem to be very long-lasting and the cloth backing is very good quality for soft and flexible control – especially suited and useful for more intricate detail.

## Conclusion

With the range of very fine grits involved, they lend themselves well to any finer abrading and polishing work. The current rekindling of my turning escapades has been well timed with the arrival of these abrasive kits, and there is a raft of other specialised bits and bobs on the website, so if miniature, intricate or finer detail work is part of your woodworking world, chances are there will be something there that may be useful to you. **GW**

## Good The Woodworking Verdict

- + Good range of grits; ideal for finer polishing
- Abrasive sheets are a tad pricy

Rating ★★★★★

Typical price: Micro finishing cloth pads: **£7.95** (pack of 6); Micro finishing abrasive sheets: **£14.95** (pack of 9); Flexifile starter set: **£10.99**;

Flexible Detail sanding kit #350: **£7.16**

Grit ranges: 3,200-12,000 (finishing pads); 1,500-12,000 (finishing cloths)

Web: [www.albionhobbies.com](http://www.albionhobbies.com)



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# Let the edge do the talking

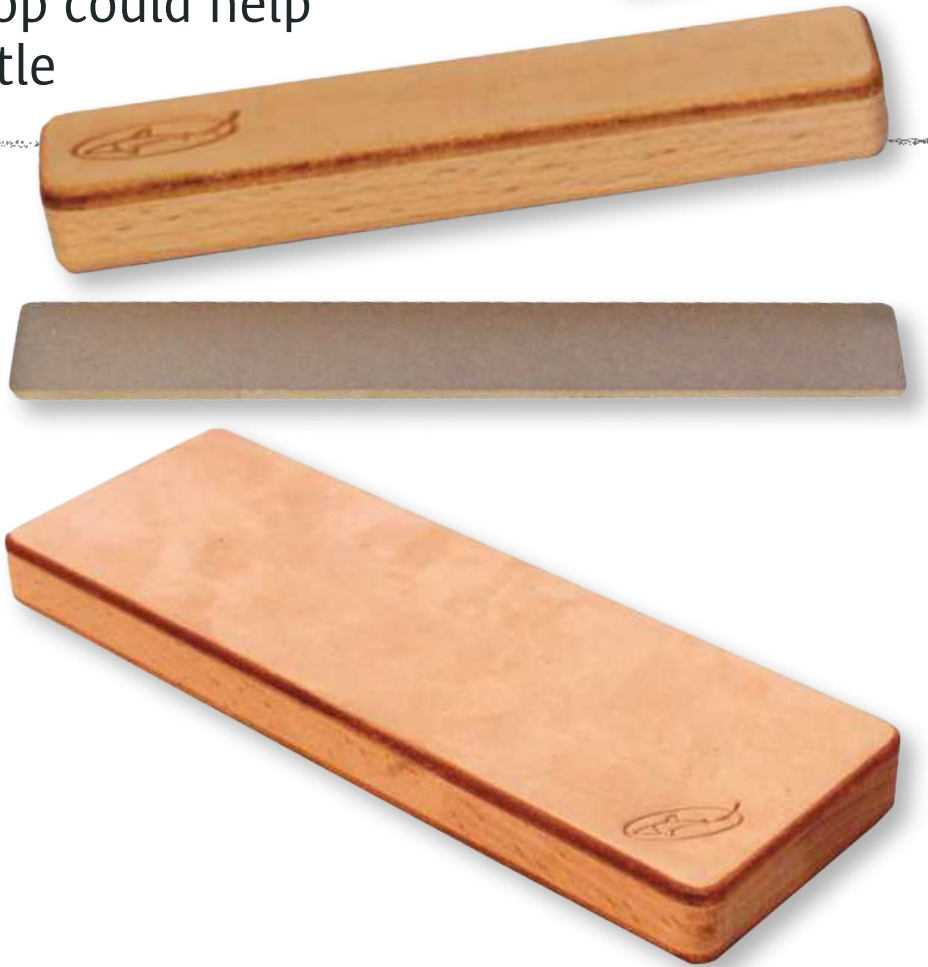
Sharpening is a bug-bear for all woodworkers, but this handy kit and double-sided strop could help to ease the pain a little

**S**harpening: the one subject guaranteed to cause consternation among many a woodworker but those who are familiar with my sharpening regime will know I only use minimal kit: a double-sided Trend Diamond Plate and occasionally, a strop, so this field sharpening kit is right up my street!

## Tip top condition

It comprises of a 125 × 25mm high-quality double-sided monocrystalline diamond stone, lapping fluid, a tube of Tormek honing paste and a premium treated leather strop bonded to a solid beech backing block, which serves to keep any knives or small edge tools in good shape, and to keep things in one place, it also comes in its own heavy-duty oiled canvas bag.

The diamond stone, supplied by James Barry Sharpening Solutions, is rated at 300 and 600 grits with the paste at around 8,000 grit – many will see this as a quantum leap from the stone to the strop. I am a firm believer in letting the edge do the talking and not to get entwined in moving from grit to grit in the same way we have to when sanding. With this particular kit aimed at the knife



▲ The diamond hone is easy to use on the bench...

▲ ... or in the hand

# Razor Shark sharpening kit & strop

Photo: © Woodworking Magazine



▲ Once stropped on the leather, the edge is incredibly keen



▲ Both the strop and the hone are useful for touching up turning tools



▲ This chisel has been honed on a diamond stone and leaves a dull finish



▲ The blackening of strop charged with a honing paste shows that it is removing steel



▲ The resulting finish is a mirror shine and an ultimate cutting edge

honers in particular (it will of course work well with other small tools), it's very quick to either grab the strop or the stone to quickly re-polish an edge to refresh its sharpness, or to raise a new wire edge to start afresh.

## Ultra keen edge

As with all diamond stones, I found the initial bite to be quite aggressive but it soon settles in to a uniform, finer cut. This is still enough to reconstitute an edge that has minor nicks using the coarse side with only a few licks needed on the finer side to begin to raise the edge.

For a more aggressive cut with a knife this can often be enough, but for a truly sharp slicing cut, the merest dab of honing paste on the strop raises it to a whole new level, not only giving an ultra keen edge but also polishing the edge to a mirror finish.

Once the strop is charged, it remains for ages so you can simply strop the edge as it dulls, only going to the stone after a really heavy dulling.

I've found this kit particularly useful for tickling my turning tools, allowing me to get a bit more from them before having to resort to a more aggressive re-hone, and ideal for keeping in the pocket for such occasions.

## Double-sided strop

Moving across to the bigger 200 × 75mm strop, this follows the same high quality of the smaller kit version. The core is quality beech faced with two thick premium leather strops so you can keep one charged with paste and the other as a bare strop.

For the bench or out and about, this particular one works alongside your preferred honing set-up for your planes, chisels and so forth, allowing you to gain that premium edge.

It's hard enough leather so as not to dub the edge over on the flat side of any blade, and if

you are a lover of the mirror-backed chisels or plane irons, working your tools on here with a fine paste does just that.

## Conclusion

I'm very impressed by the quality of these bits of kit. Depending on where you want to do your ultimate edge work, there's a choice of the bigger bench strop for the planes and chisels or the honing kit for the knives and smaller stuff, although both do a perfect job of gaining or keeping the ultimate edge. **GW**

## Good The Woodworking Verdict

+ Quality hard leather strop on stable beech core; great all-in-one kit for knives

– Could perhaps have a slightly finer grit on one side of the diamond stone; no paste supplied with the bigger strop

**Rating** ★★★★★

**Typical price:** Field sharpening kit – **£48**;

200 × 75mm double-sided strop – **£28**

**Strop materials:** Beech and premium treated leather

**Diamond stone:** Monocrystalline

**Grit:** 300 & 600

**Web:** www.beaverbushcraft.co.uk



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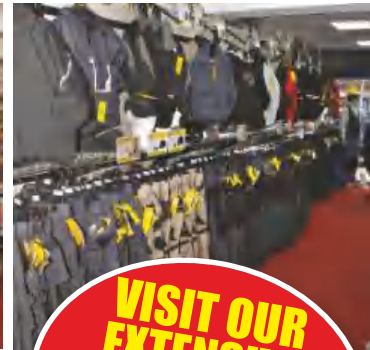
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# Workshop set-up: getting it right

In the first of a new 12-part series, pro furniture maker John Bullar takes you through the steps for setting up a workshop and choosing the best tools for the jobs in hand





▲ Pic.1 Your own furniture can be unique and treasured, such as this collector's case made from English sycamore and English walnut

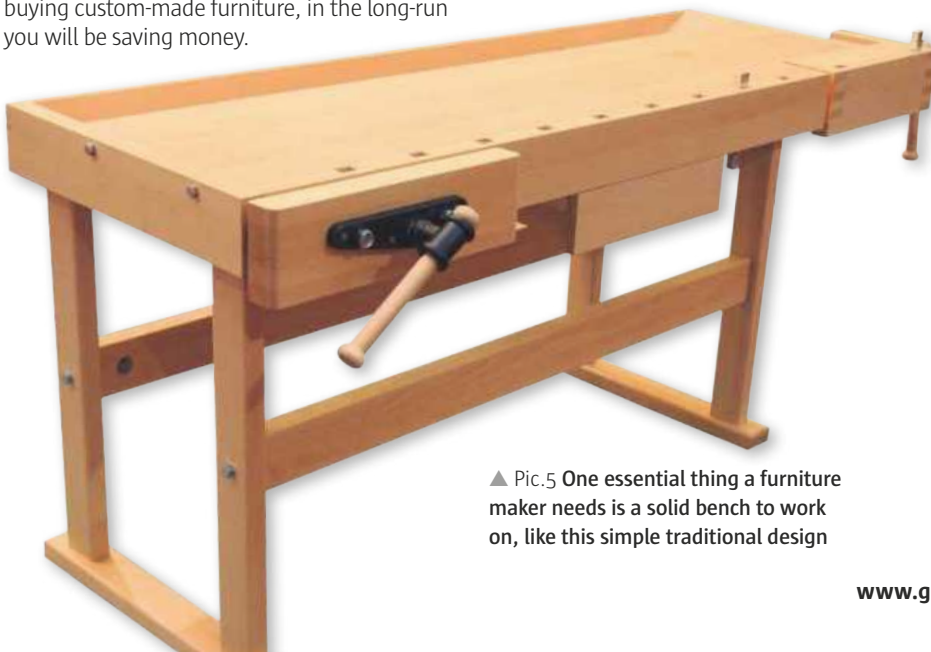
**T**his new series on making your own furniture will guide you through setting up a workshop and choosing the right tools and materials, as well as studying in detail some of the most useful construction techniques.

We start this month by looking at why people choose to make their own furniture and how to decide what space you'll need for a workshop.

## Why make furniture?

People start making their own furniture for many reasons. Often it's because they have an idea or a request for something unique that cannot be bought or else they want to make an item of high quality that will be passed down the family (Pic.1). Once it is known that you have gained furniture making skills there will be no end of people asking you to make things for them, then it's up to you whether you want to explore that route or keep your work exclusively at home.

Saving money is another possible reason, but good tools and good wood are pricey. Although there is some very cheap mass-produced furniture imported nowadays, this doesn't compare with the quality you can make yourself so it doesn't make sense to compare it on price. However, compared to buying custom-made furniture, in the long-run you will be saving money.



▲ Pic.5 One essential thing a furniture maker needs is a solid bench to work on, like this simple traditional design



▲ Pic.2 Small, fine detailed pieces are ideal for making in a small workshop



▲ Pic.3 Larger furniture needs more space to accommodate the wood, tools and machines as well as the finished pieces



▲ Pic.4 Furniture you make can be specially designed to hold equipment or to fit in oddly-shaped spaces

When you start making furniture you will be continuously learning and so each step will probably take longer than you anticipated, and you may have some re-work. But that's OK – give yourself time to learn. It is far better to work slowly and produce something you can be proud of. Next time you do the same task, you will have anticipated the problems and gained more skill so it will be quicker.

## Large or small workshop?

Furniture makers often establish their first workshops in garages, outbuildings or spare rooms or else they purpose-build a workshop. The choices depend on space, budget, noise and consideration for other people around.

The size of the workshop obviously depends on the size of projects you plan to tackle.

# Start furniture making



▲ Pic.6 This upmarket design of furniture maker's bench has built-in storage space



▲ Pic.7 The bench vice is a necessary tool to grip wood while sawing and planing



▲ Pic.8 In this overhead shot you can see my frequently used tools are close behind the bench used for hand tool work

Remember that the workshop will also need to accommodate the wood, tools and any machines as well as the finished piece.

Having a limited space need not prevent you starting to make furniture. Ideally, the furniture you plan to construct should fit into the size of your workshop. In a small workshop it can be very satisfying and rewarding to concentrate on small items such as display and jewellery cases (Pic.2). However, with suitable designs it is also possible to build large pieces in small modules that are later assembled on site (Pic.3).

## Get a good bench

A cabinetmaker's bench has a large, flat surface made from heavy-duty wood with one vice on the front and another at the end (Pic.5). If you can acquire a second-hand bench, then so much the better. If the top is badly chipped, be prepared to flatten it or fit a new surface.

Building your own bench is a good early project for a new furniture maker to consider. It needs to follow a good design and be sturdy – great practise for your construction skills, too.



▲ Pic.9 Old kitchen cupboards on the wall or floor make excellent storage, keeping the dust off bottles, tins and lesser-used tools



▲ Pic.10 Fine detailed work is demanding on the eyes so it needs plenty of light if you are going to make joints that fit well without gaps



▲ Pic.11 Skylight windows and fluorescent tubes at right angles will ensure you are never working in shadows while a filtration unit extracts airborne dust

In the beginning, you can get by with a workmate type of bench – its long grip vice jaws will always come in useful later as a second bench. The main shortcomings of this type are its small size and its lack of mass compared to a real cabinetmaker's bench and you may also need to block it for the right height to avoid bending.

## Storing tools & materials

An open tool rack close to the main workbench is best for frequently used tools. Other tools and materials or jars and bottles of finishes are best stored behind cupboard doors where they will not collect dust. Recycled kitchen cabinets are ideal for this (Pic.9).

The space under the bench itself is useful and close to hand. Some expensive benches have built-in cupboards beneath.

## Seeing the details

Fine detailed work is demanding on the eyes so the workshop needs plenty of light if you are going to make joints that fit well without gaps (Pic.10). Daylight from a large window is great as it produces little shadow and has a good colour with no flicker, and it's also free! A fluorescent tube is efficient but two or more



▲ Pic.12 A desk light on the bench is ideal for fine work and can also be used, as here, to check for gaps

of them spaced out, preferably at right angles, are much better for reducing shadows (Pic.11).

A desk light with a long moveable arm is an excellent supplement to background lighting for close detailed work (Pic.12).

## Keep down the dust

Cutting wood creates dust, which floats around in the air we breathe as well as settling on floors, shelves and tools (Pic.13). Machines create far more dust than hand tools and they also have fan-cooled motors that propel it into the air. Sanding machines and hand-held power sanders are the worst offenders. If you plan to buy any woodworking machine or a sander, you must also get suitable extraction for it to collect the dust at source.

The hand plane is a low-dust tool that creates crisp, clean surfaces and edges while producing beautiful curly shavings. By planing smooth surfaces and straight edges, the need for sanding can be kept to a minimum.

## Stay dry

It is important that the workshop stays dry to prevent tools rusting and wood swelling or being eaten by woodworm.

A good roof on the workshop and well-sealed



▲ Pic.13 Sanding dust needs to be collected at source otherwise it gets everywhere

# Start furniture making



▲ Pic.14 A good roof and well sealed windows will keep the workshop dry and the humidity normal



▲ Pic.15 Big saws like this can be very accurate but they tend to be used less by furniture makers nowadays while small hand saws are essential for fine work



▲ Pic.16 Portable power tools such as this jigsaw are good for roughing out wood before finally trimming to size with a hand plane or machine



▲ Pic.17 The smallest of fixed woodworking machines such as this sliding cross-cut saw are handy for cutting angles or straight ends on relatively narrow pieces of wood

windows will stop drips and also keep the atmosphere dry (Pic.14). If the workshop stands by itself it will need insulating and some low-powered background heating is essential in winter. The temperature does not need to be high; just a few degrees above outside to drive out moisture and prevent liquids freezing. In fact, when I am working hard it can be nice to breathe cool, fresh air, but not so cold that my breath condenses on tools!

Provided there are no leaks or draughts in the workshop, an electric de-humidifier will keep the moisture level down and uses less energy than a heater.

## Hand tools or power?

Before looking at any tools in detail, it is best to have an idea of how you will be equipping your new workshop. The three main categories we divide tools into are hand tools, power tools and machines.

Hand tools, which are unpowered, include small saws (Pic.15), chisels, planes and special

gouges, scrapers, etc. Hand tools are extremely versatile and developing accuracy with their use is the first and most important part of a furniture maker's training.

Power tools are hand-held motorised devices such as drills, jigsaws (Pic.16), circular saws and routers. Their usefulness to the furniture maker is more limited than many people would imagine. Generally power tools are not accurate enough for fine furniture making but the router is an exception because it can be guided on rails or jigs.

Woodworking machines are large fixed tools driven by electric motors. They range from small cross-cut saws and bandsaws to large saw-benches, planer/thicknessers and versatile combination machines. In a big workshop there may be several large, expensive high precision machines but their cost is only justified when the maker is producing a lot of work.

Small machines can be useful especially cross-cut saws (Pic.17) and bandsaws. If you are planning a small workshop, it is worth

thinking ahead to the space these will take. In summary, I recommend concentrating on learning hand tool skills first. I would only invest in a machine when you need it to tackle a larger project and have a good idea of how you are going to use it.

## Old tools or new?

Good tools can be expensive and it is easy to buy the wrong ones, so it makes sense to get them one at a time and get to know each one before investing in the next.

In choosing tools you need to decide whether to buy old or new. If you are handed down old cabinetmaker's tools or you pick them up for next to nothing, then you are bound to use old tools first. Cleaning and restoring nice quality equipment is very satisfying and helps you appreciate its details.

Obviously you can save money by buying second-hand but good tools are expensive and that often includes old ones, too. Also, be aware there are many tool collectors around who push up the prices charged for certain makes of 'antique' tools.

A few years ago, I would have said that vintage hand tools were better quality than the new ones available but now there are some very good modern tools. As well as not being worn or knocked about these benefit from using high-tech alloy steel blades that are less easily chipped than old carbon steels.

## What's coming next?

Over future articles we will look at using planes and saws for wood preparation, marking tools, chisels and routers for joints as well as glues, clamps, fittings and finishes.

This 12-part series of articles will be published every second month so as to give you a chance to investigate and get to grips with new tools and techniques at each stage before moving on. [GW](#)

### NEXT MONTH

In issue 302, John will look at choosing wood and making sure it is in the best condition for your project



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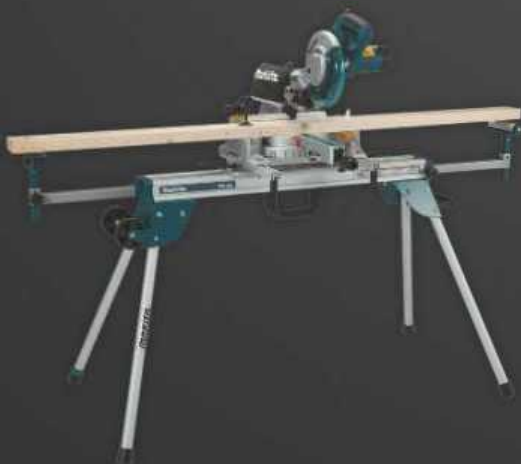
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# SHED OF THE YEAR

2015 WINNERS!



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SHEDS TO APPEAL TO YOUR INNER 'SHEDDIE'!



## Shed of the Year

From the wacky to the wonderful

Winner of Shed of the Year 2015 – Walter Micklethwait from Aviemore with his Inshriach Distillery



Cuprinol's new Spray & Brush is ideal for transforming your garden sheds and fences – less mess and fuss free!

First started in 2007, the Shed of the Year competition has gone from strength to strength and the 'Sheddies' are showing no signs of stopping any time soon!

**T**he Shed of the Year competition, sponsored by Cuprinol, is the brainchild of shed-fanatic Uncle Wilco (Andrew Wilcox), who launched the nationwide competition nine years ago to celebrate the best of British sheds. Since its inception, the competition has grown and grown, with the UK seemingly becoming more and more obsessed with this humble garden construction. Brand Manager for Cuprinol, Katie Taylor says: "At Cuprinol, we're so proud to be the sponsors of Shed of the Year for the fifth year running. The Channel 4 series has showcased some extraordinary sheds in the competition to millions of viewers and has hopefully inspired the nation to get creative with their own garden havens."

Back in July, more people than ever tuned in to Channel 4 to see the growing number of finalists get chosen and every week, two more 'Sheddies' were entered into the final. Following a record-breaking number of entries – over 2,500 – it's clear that this competition

is getting bigger and better each year. Two new categories were also introduced in 2015: 'Historical' and 'Budget', the latter proving that you don't have to spend a lot to create something beautiful or unusual.

The finalists comprised of the top four sheds in each of the eight categories (Pub, Eco, Normal, Workshop & Studio, Unique, Cabin & Summerhouse, Garden Office, Historical and Budget shed) and for the second year running, featured on hit TV series *Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year*.

The category winners were revealed on the show and then went head-to-head in a battle to become the overall winner selected by a panel of shed experts including Andrew Wilcox, last year's overall winner Joel Bird, and George Clarke and his expert team. George Clarke said that the excitement around this year's show was electric: "Myself and the *Amazing Spaces* team returned for a second time this year with an even bigger series as it extended by an extra episode." George and the team travelled the length and breadth of the

British Isles visiting the mind-blowing sheds, and the extraordinary talent behind them, all vying to be crowned Shed of the Year 2015."

Andrew Wilcox said: "Since launching the competition I've certainly seen a trend towards people getting more creative and viewing their garden shed as an extension of the home. The response to the competition this year has been unbelievable and it's been really tough trying to agree on the 36 finalists as there were some phenomenal entries across all of the categories. The second TV series just shows how big the appetite is for sheds – it's wonderful to see the Great British shed getting the recognition it deserves."

The winner of Shed of the Year 2015, Walter Micklethwait from Aviemore in Scotland, was crowned in the final instalment of *Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year* on Sunday 12 July. He received £1,000 courtesy of sponsors Cuprinol along with a wooden plaque, £100 worth of Cuprinol products and a giant crown for his shed!



The Cuprinol Garden Shades range includes 36 bright and beautiful pre-mixed colours





# The man behind Shed of the Year

## Andrew Wilcox – ‘Uncle Wilco’

We find out more about ‘Head Sheddie’ and competition founder **Andrew Wilcox**, who is king of championing the Great British shed

### How did you originally come up with the idea for Shed of the Year?

I was originally inspired by my Grandfather’s amazing allotment shed and I set up the Reader Sheds website ([www.readersheds.co.uk](http://www.readersheds.co.uk)) in 2001. People used to upload photos of their sheds and we had a small competition to judge which one was best. The first Shed of the Year competition ran in 2007, when most sheds were the off-the-shelf variety, but over the years, people have taken the idea and ran with it. It started off as a bit of fun; I never imagined it’d get as big as it has! What I love about the competition is the Sheddies’ passion for what they do, and Shed of the Year is all about showcasing their dedication and hard work.

### What was your favourite shed entered this year?

That is a very difficult question to answer as each one is so different. If I had to choose one I’d say Ben Fillmore’s ‘Shedservatory’. Although it looks like a normal shed from the outside, it’s unique in the fact the roof opens and you can see the sky at night. This shed fuses two passions: sheds and stargazing. I’m a big fan of workshop sheds – where people are making things in them and being creative. Anthony Wesley’s ‘Cabin of the Green Man’ was another favourite. Anthony is a self-taught woodcarver and the rustic work he creates in it is fantastic. The one I always look back at, however, was one of the first ever entries and the original winner: Tony Rogers’ Roman Temple, which was designed as a folly. I have to say that it’s the most creative idea I’ve seen and the most eccentric! Every time I see it, it makes me smile. How can anyone top that?

Each year we have so many special entries, which makes it so difficult to pick an ultimate winner. I always think: ‘I wish I had come up

with that idea!’ – I’m in amazement each year. I only have a basic potting shed – I don’t have the time to tend mine as I’m always looking at other peoples’ sheds! However, with a lot of help, I hope to build a pub-shed-cum-workshop next year.

### How did you come up with the different categories for the competition?

It’s so difficult to categorise and pigeonhole the sheds, but I suppose these were defined by the entries and they grew from there. The two new categories for this year were ‘Historical’ and ‘Budget’. We tend to let the Sheddies categorise themselves but each year the entries are getting more diverse, so new categories need to evolve. It’s really difficult to choose, though!

### Where do you see the shed obsession going?

I don’t think the shed phenomenon has ever been a fad – the original Sheddies will always be there and it’s growing and growing in popularity. I get a lot of people emailing me to ask questions about how the sheds are built, which shows that people are always intrigued by what others are making. Sheds will always be here and what I love is the fact that in every instance, they’re a place where people go to escape, no matter how different each one is from the next. The passion for the shed is strong!

### What’s your view on the ‘She Shed’ – is it the next big thing?

Lady Sheddies have always existed from day

one. I think the next big thing can only be determined by the public. The pub shed was really popular this year but no matter what, sheds will always be places where people go to escape and unwind.

### What can we expect from the 2016 competition? What’s new?

Watch this space! People are now able to enter but obviously no one knows who will apply, but we’re all very excited! A lot of people are working away on their sheds in the background – some Sheddies love being in the limelight but a lot of them don’t want to show their sheds; it just depends on the person, really.

I hope we get a lot more unique shed entries next year – I’d love another Roman temple; that would blow my mind! At the end of the day, every entry is different as are the Sheddies. I’ve seen a lot of sheds over the years and I truly am in awe of the people who enter – they really do make the competition.

New sheds are added every year but people do tend to re-enter their sheds as they add more to them and make them bigger and better. Although the competition is open to UK and Ireland residents only, I do see a lot of sheds throughout the world. In fact, I’m going to Barcelona soon to see some Gaudi-style sheds. People in New Zealand are really into their sheds; barn-style sheds are seeming to be popular and we’re also seeing a lot of modern sheds coming through.

I’m really looking forward to seeing what the Sheddies pull out of their hats for 2016!



Ben Fillmore’s Shedservatory – an observatory-cum-garden-office with a telescope permanently mounted inside the roof



Anthony Wesley’s Cabin of the Green Man, whose chainsaw carvings are incorporated into the shed’s frame and structure

## Shed of the Year 2015 Finalists

See the shortlisted sheds from each of the nine categories

### 'Pub'

### OVERALL WINNER



#### Simon's Night Club: owned by Simon Steele from Surrey

Simon's Night Club sits over a pond and has floor to ceiling glass windows that look out onto the garden. The interior contains a bar and chill-out area and is filled with a haven of collectables gathered from car boot sales over the years. It is totally unique and has taken years to fill and extend using all sorts of materials and odds and ends.



#### The Bikers: owned by Michael Jolley from West Sussex

Hand-built over several years, The Bikers shed consists of six rooms filled with pub and motorcycle memorabilia. There's a large workshop for building and repairing bikes, a room for home brewery, a bar, a smoking room and an eating room. On occasion, it is also used to raise money for Simon's local hospice.



#### Pirate Retreat: owned by Keith Brown from Surrey

The Pirate Retreat shed is home to pirate-themed parties and regular gatherings. It's filled to the brim with pirate-themed objects and trinkets from Keith's holidays to the Caribbean. It also contains a fully stocked bar, a dining area which seats up to 10 people, a dance area, 1,000W sound system, disco lighting and an electric drawbridge and moat.



#### Inshriach Distillery: owned by Walter Micklethwait from Scotland

Built on a farmyard in the Scottish Highlands, the Inshriach Distillery was once a dilapidated hen house. Today it is made up of a farm shop, ladies waiting room, saloon bar and distillery. The General Stores is a shop selling items the couple have carved or whittled on the farm as well as eggs and produce from their gardens.

### 'Eco'

### WINNER Eco category



#### Eco Dome: owned by Paul Robinson from Cumbria

Known to locals as 'The Tardis', this shed's spectacular 7m domed roof is made from 16 gauge aluminium and is used as a woodworking workshop on the ground floor with an office and gym upstairs. The Eco Dome has been used for numerous things from a duck shed to an art studio, to a plant house. The dome has its own private water supply from a well and off-grid electricity.



#### Rammed Earth: owned by Michael Thompson from Norfolk

Made using raw materials, mainly earth, the sustainable Rammed Earth shed, complete with living roof, took 2,700 hours to build and is used as a joinery workshop in which to make wooden bicycles. Having had no previous building experience, owner Michael Thompson now runs practical courses on rammed earth and people from around the world visit the Rammed Earth shed.



#### Cormacs Bothy: owned by Cormac Seekings from Scotland

Constructed in situ within a Scottish forest and designed and detailed to last, Cormacs Bothy is inspired by vernacular architecture of the Carpathians and was built using low-grade forest timber, windblown oak and traditional natural preservatives. The shed is raised on tree stumps on the edge of a small clearing and is used as a work shelter space and off-grid simple life retreat/hang-out for his friends.



#### Owl House: owned by Tracy Caroline Lewis from Liverpool

This stunning eco-build, built in 2011, sits at the top of a garden where it overlooks a panorama of Hightown dunes, the ships coming and going in the distance and beautiful sunsets. The Owl House resembles an owl due to the unique curved wooden window frames. The beautiful space is made entirely from cob, recycled plywood and collected recycled glass bottles and even has a grass living roof.

## 'Normal'

**WINNER**  
Normal  
category



### **Dream City Railway:** owned by Roy James from Kent

Built over a period of 20 years, Dream City Railway contains one of the largest and most complex standard gauge 0 model railway layouts in the UK. 30 trains run simultaneously through 17 stations automatically controlled from a central control room with the aid of closed circuit televisions. The layout covers 2,000sq.ft. and contains more than 100 locomotives and 400 coaches and wagons.



### **Shedservatory:** owned by Ben Fillmore from Buckinghamshire

By night, the Shedservatory is an observatory in which the roof rolls off and opens up to reveal the sky. It houses owner Ben Fillmore's telescopes for stargazing. By day it's used as a garden office decorated with colourful rugs. The shed measures 4.5 x 2.4m and was built in 2014, all by hand and entirely by Ben. Thanks to the use of cedar for the roof shingling, fascias and floor, the shed smells amazing, too!



### **The Art Zarb Cabin Cinema:** owned by Art Zarb from Leicestershire

The Art Zarb Cabin Cinema is a tailor-made 1960s-style cinema. It has three tiered rows of four original cinema seats, a 3m screen, motorised curtains, variable footlights, overhead colour controlled pelmet lighting, projectors and a surround sound system. Art's wife is chief usherette and serves ice creams in the intervals as well as operating the mini bar!



### **Maid of Dekkin:** owned by Cormac Hawkins from Surrey

Maid of Dekkin is a floating beach hut on a river. Situated on a decked pontoon, the shed contains an engine and steering wheel and can be driven on water. It's totally personally built and customised from the bottom up by owner Cormac Hawkins. This summerhouse-style shed also acts as a motorised floating garden and features a fold-out bed, tables, chairs, parasol and a drinks trolley.

## 'Workshop & Studio'

**WINNER**  
Workshop  
& Studio  
category



### **Darkroom No1:** owned by Shener Hathaway from South London

Darkroom No1 was built over a period of seven years and is used as a retreat from the owner's everyday building and decorating life, to escape into a world of photography and design. A studio and dark room for producing photography, it houses photography equipment and portraits and has a comfy seating area, which makes it a great relaxation space.



### **My Lady's Retreat:** owned by Alban and Angela Bunting from Somerset

Overlooking the stunning Mendip Hills, My Lady's Retreat is a Victorian-style working potting shed and greenhouse complete with a porcelain sink and pitch pine stairs that lead up to a little sleeping area. The interior wall is emulsioned with a scumble glaze to give it a Victorian look and it even contains 1920s electric wall lights and a Victorian cast-iron range.



### **Eccentrica:** owned by Lyndon Yorke from Buckinghamshire

Eccentrica is used as a creative space in which owner Lyndon Yorke makes eccentric creations such as a 1922 Wickerwork Citroen. The quirky shack most notably has World War II aircraft gun turrets on the roof, an aeroplane propeller mounted on the outside and there's even an old mangle and a couple of life jackets to complete the look! In Lyndon's words it is old, eccentric and wacky.



### **Cabin of the Green Man:** owned by Luke Anthony Wesley from Bedfordshire

This shed is a workshop from which Luke Anthony Wesley creates beautifully intricate chainsaw carvings of Green Man faces. Nestled in a Clapham back garden, this beautifully carved shed is made from ash from local woodland, pallets, reclaimed timber and reclaimed glass; the inside walls are made from old pallets, furniture and a number of wooden units.

## 'Unique'



**Goring Folly:**  
owned by Timothy Blewitt from West Sussex

Made using locally reclaimed materials, Goring Folly contains two rooms with lofts above, as well as a tower with spiral steps leading down to a natural well.



**Terry's Treehouse:**  
owned by Terry Meredith from Gloucestershire

Terry's Treehouse is 4.5m off the ground, supported by four oak trees and has panoramic views of the Cotswold Escarpment, Malvern Hills and Welsh Mountains.



**Japanese Tea House:**  
owned by Derek Verlander from Essex

The outside is based on a westernised version of a Japanese tea house, and inside the shed you can find Japanese ornaments, a tropical fish tank and even a small bar.



**Micro shed:**  
owned by Colin Edmondson from Greater Manchester

The rather extraordinary Micro Shed is built on a miniature railway wagon. It's mobile and measures in at just 1.2 x 0.6 x 1.2m tall.

**WINNER**  
Unique  
category

## 'Garden Office'



**Multi-purpose Hide out:**  
owned by David G Connor

This shed makes for a good bird hide and has glazed units, which act as a mirror from the outside. David used old doors for walls, mirrors and failed double glazed units to make the shed and it is floored using surplus tiles. This shed comprises of three rooms.



**Magniloquent cave (Mag-cave):**  
owned by Rod Lawless from Gloucestershire

Really a cross genre shed, this is Rod's office-cum-writing-room primarily. Designed to be eco-friendly it features recycled decking, doors and windows as well as solar powered lights.



**Pear Tree Weddings' HQ:**  
owned by Jo Gosling from Northamptonshire

This is the HQ for Pear Tree Weddings, the UK's leading vintage and classic VW camper van and Beetle wedding hire service. This working office was painted using Cuprinol White Daisy and Cuprinol Sage colours.



**Crafty Monkey at the Beach:**  
owned by Chrissy Brown from Cambridgeshire

Self-confessed 'shedaholic' Chrissy's shed is a happy, calm and uplifting space where she can escape from the hectic outside world and is also a work space for her arts, crafts and pottery.

**WINNER**  
Garden  
Office  
category

## 'Cabin & Summerhouse'



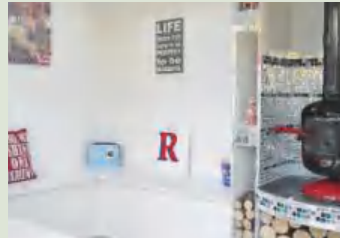
**Garden Cottage:**  
owned by Tim Clark from East Sussex

This shed is based on the traditional medieval hall houses, which were famous throughout Kent and East Sussex. The oak frame is carved out of solid oak beams and the front is made to look like a cottage with the inside as a normal functional shed.



**Pixie Cabin:**  
owned by Mark Burton from Surrey

Built without a spirit level or tape measure, this shed is designed to look like an old falling down house. It's uniquely mobile and is used as a tea room, an office, a place to store tools and to keep dry when it rains. It even contains a log burner to keep warm.



**Shedible:**  
owned by Bill Roberts from Newcastle

Once a 4.3m redundant burger van, Shedible is now a cosy space containing seating that converts into two large sleeping areas. All items have been hand-crafted including an upcycled woodburner and the fireplace is decorated with tiles and mosaics.



**Teasel's Wood Cabin:**  
owned by Rebecca Bunting from Nottinghamshire

The cosy Teasel's Wood Cabin is a mixture of different American style cabins and the interior is filled with furniture, decorations and objects, which the couple have picked up during their travels to the USA.

**WINNER**  
Cabin &  
Summerhouse  
category

## 'Historical'

**WINNER**  
Historical  
category



**Starliner Diner:**  
owned by Chris Galley  
from West Sussex

A brick, block and steel construction, Starliner Diner is an Art Deco style, retro diner. Inside it contains a diner booth made from old boat seats, as well as home-made furniture and a selection of restored vintage jukeboxes. Complete with air conditioning, a 1950s heating system, lighting effects and internet, the Starliner Diner is home to parties and relaxation.



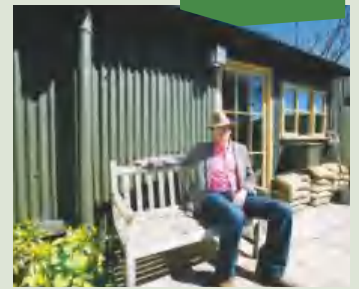
**Garden House:**  
owned by Tim Concannon  
from Hampshire

Semi-underground, the Garden House is a copy of a 17th-century Anglo-Saxon House with a green roof. Inside it's furnished with seats and a stove and is used as an art studio as well as a venue for ancient poetry speaking and traditional 7th century dinner parties. Tim has used the shed for conducting numerous feasts and theatrical performances.



**Bernard Shaw's Writing Hut:** owned by Sue Morgan from Hertfordshire

Once home to Irish playwright Bernard Shaw, the shed is where he wrote many of his masterpieces including *Superman*. The shed revolves to catch the sun and is fitted with Vitaglass, a special kind of healthy glass that lets the sun's ultraviolet rays through. Shaw entertained some famous visitors in his hut, namely Stuart Grainger and Vivien Leigh.



**Corrugated Cottage:**  
owned by Michael Chapman from Somerset

Used in World War II to house land girls, Corrugated Cottage is made of corrugated iron and features tongue & groove wood panels inside; it has been renovated with original 1940s and 1950s furniture and collectables, including a seating area, kitchen and bathroom complete with a Victorian bath. Corrugated Cottage is now let out by Michael as a quirky holiday home.

## 'Budget'

**WINNER**  
Budget  
category



**The Shed!**  
Owned by Sue Wilson  
from Leicestershire

The Shed! was built as a birthday present for Sue from her husband using firewood and offcuts of oak from a local wood yard. Complete with a veranda overlooking a large pond, The Shed! is used as a place to relax in and for owner Sue Wilson to knit from.



**Cliffhanger:**  
owned by Karen Scott  
from Norfolk

Situated 15m from the cliff edge, Cliffhanger is made from beach hut debris following a tidal surge. As a result, the shed cost just £250 to build. Built by sculptor Peter Talbot, the shed is used to sell collectables, household items and quirky pieces of art.



**Hillbilly Shed:**  
owned by Dave Bell  
from North Yorkshire

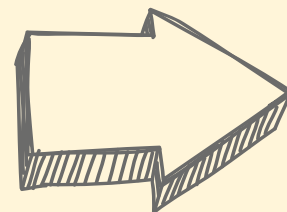
Hillbilly Shed is an American-themed tiny wood cabin, which is situated on the back of a 1946 Chevrolet truck. Inside is a bed, cooker, toilet, stereo system and cupboards. It's used as a place to sleep when owner Dave Bell travels to events and festivals.



**Ty Mynydd Fach (Little Mountain Hut):**  
owned by Andy Walker  
from Lancashire

Ty Mynydd Fach is made in the style of an alpine hut and is entirely hand-built using a wealth of recycled materials. This amazing space brings the mountains to the city and is a little piece of escapism for Andy.

Over the next 10 pages we'll show you each of the category winners, plus we reveal the 2015 overall winner!



## The 2015 Winners

**WINNER**  
Eco  
category



Owl House

**O**wned by Tracy Caroline Lewis from Liverpool, who narrowly missed out on becoming the overall winner, Owl House gets its name due to its unique curved wooden window frames, which make it look just like an owl. Made entirely from cob, recycled plywood and collected recycled glass bottles, it even has a grass living roof. Tracy uses her shed as a means of escapism and relaxation, and it houses a bed and comfy chairs and also has a wonderful view overlooking coastal sand dunes.

Tracy said: "Being part of the Shed of the Year competition has been such an exciting journey and to win the Eco category is a huge compliment. The Owl House, lovingly built and designed by my friend Leonardo Alvarez Pinel, is not only a beautiful creation, but also provides wheelchair access, which is crucial in allowing me to enjoy the great outdoors."



**WINNER**  
Normal  
category

## Maid of Dekkin



**O**wned by Cormac Hawkins from Surrey, Maid of Dekkin is a floating beach hut on a river.

Situated on a decked pontoon, the shed contains an engine and steering wheel and can be driven on water. Used for relaxing in, the shed is complete with a fold-out bed, tables, chairs, a parasol and a drinks trolley.

Cormac said: "I'm honoured to have won the Normal category in the Shed of the Year competition. It was hugely unexpected – the other entries were so clever and unique. The competition is all about fun and the celebration of creativity and quirkiness, and Maid of Dekkin is designed to be enjoyed. It has always given me and my friends and family a huge amount of pleasure and I hope it brings a smile to all those that see it."

**WINNER  
Workshop  
& Studio  
category**



*Cabin of the Green Man*

**O**wned by Luke Anthony Wesley from Bedfordshire, Cabin of the Green Man is used as a workshop from which he creates beautifully intricate chainsaw carvings of Green Man faces. It is a freestanding structure made from ash from local woodland, pallets, reclaimed timber and reclaimed glass. The inside walls are made from old pallets, furniture and wooden units. Luke said: "I have thoroughly enjoyed building and showing my shed and being part of the programme."





**WINNER**  
**Unique**  
**Category**



*Micro  
Shed*



**O**wned by Colin Edmonson from Greater Manchester, the truly unique and mobile Micro Shed measures just 1.2 x 0.6 x 1.2m tall and is built on a miniature railway wagon. There's just enough room for a comfy deep buttoned seat, a stove, a model railway and a shelf for a whisky glass. Colin said: "Our little 'shed on a railway' was intended to make people smile and now it's us who are smiling! It is wonderful to know that there are so many people out there who share an interest in miniature railways and voted for us. We certainly didn't expect to get this far in the competition and have had so much fun in the process."

**WINNER**  
Cabin &  
Summerhouse  
category

## Teasel's Wood Cabin



**O**wned by Rebecca Bunting from Nottinghamshire, Teasel's Wood Cabin is inspired by American log cabins and fuses a mixture of different styles. The exterior walls are made with larch cladding to achieve an authentic rustic look with cedar shakes on the roof. Used as an extra living space, the interior décor and furniture has been collected from America. Rebecca said: "Being involved in the Shed of the Year competition has been an exhilarating experience and something I will remember forever... Thanks to all those who helped us realise our dream!"



**WINNER**  
Garden  
Office  
category

*Crafty  
Monkey at  
the Beach*



**T**he Garden Office category was won by **Crafty Monkey at the Beach** owner **Chrissy Brown** from **Cambridgeshire**. An oasis of calm and a place for escapism in a hectic world, Chrissy's shed doubles up as a stunning beach-themed retreat full of seaside mementos collected from all over the world and as a work space for her arts, crafts and pottery projects. Chrissy said: "When I built a garden office at the bottom of my garden, I had no idea it would take over my life – for the better! I became an instant shed-a-holic!"

**WINNER**  
Historical  
category

## Corrugated Cottage



**O**wned by Michael Chapman from Somerset, Corrugated Cottage was originally used in World War II to house

land girls. It is made of corrugated iron and has been renovated with 1940s and 1950s furniture and collectables, including a seating area, kitchen and bathroom.

Michael said: "I'm amazed and shocked to win the Historical category in the Shed of the Year competition and would like to thank friends, family and everyone who voted for Corrugated Cottage. Lovingly restored using my skills as a trained artist in the conservation of old buildings, I now treat my shed as my own personal art installation."



**WINNER**  
Budget  
category



*Ty Mynydd Fach*



**O**wned by Andy Walker from Lancashire, Ty Mynydd Fach is inspired by his love of mountain climbing.

Made in the style of an alpine hut, it is entirely hand-built using a wealth of recycled materials. Timber beams, pine panelling, marquetry, quirky accessories, carvings and beautiful lighting brings a touch of the peaks to Andy's garden.

He said: "The Shed of the Year competition has been an awesome experience from start to finish – particularly hugging George Clarke on national TV! We feel so proud that our

hut won the category and plan to hold events in our shed this summer to raise funds for charity."





## Inshriach Distillery

**OVERALL  
WINNER**

**WINNER  
Pub  
category**

**A**fter a record-breaking 2,520 entries, Walter Micklethwait was crowned winner of the 2015 Shed of the Year competition with his Inshriach Distillery. Once a dilapidated hen house, the Inshriach Distillery has now become a farm shop, which sells carved items, eggs and produce, a saloon bar which is a Wild West-themed gin joint and a velour upholstered piano bar. Made out of mostly recycled items including parts of an old dismantled railway station, the Inshriach Distillery has a unique charm and is home to regular parties.

Revealed for the first time by George Clarke on Channel 4's *Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year*, the nail-biting competition came to a close with Walter taking home the coveted title. However, for the first time ever, the competition went to deadlock, causing organisers to refer back to the majority public vote to determine Walter's shed as the 2015 Shed of the Year winner, which was nearly taken by Tracy Lewis and her Owl House – sadly she missed out on the prestigious title by a whisker as the panel could not collectively decide between the two sheds.

Walter commented: "We faced stiff competition in the Pub category so it feels great to have won it! I would like to say a huge thanks to everyone who voted for Inshriach

Distillery. What made the competition for me were my fellow Sheddies; it was a great pleasure to meet and make friends with a collection of offbeat, creative, constructive, and eccentric characters."

When asked about his winning shed, Walter said: "We were up against some proper craftsmen, brilliant eccentrics and most of all a really nice bunch of people so it is an absolute honour to have won this year's competition. A huge thanks again to everyone who voted for us. We're now looking forward to celebrating with a gin from the distillery in our shed!"

George Clarke said: "The nation's love for transforming their garden shed to an extension of the home is really on trend right now. People are embracing the fascinating world of sheds like never before as the TV show highlighted some of the most creative, beautiful and unusual sheds in the country, as well as allowing me to meet the talented people behind their creations."

Andrew Wilcox went on to say: "Picking the winner was no mean feat, with a record-breaking number of entries, the calibre of sheds has been incredible, making this the biggest and best competition to date. Walter's Inshriach Distillery epitomises the competition's ethos of a shed being a reflection of a person's personality, passion and creativity."

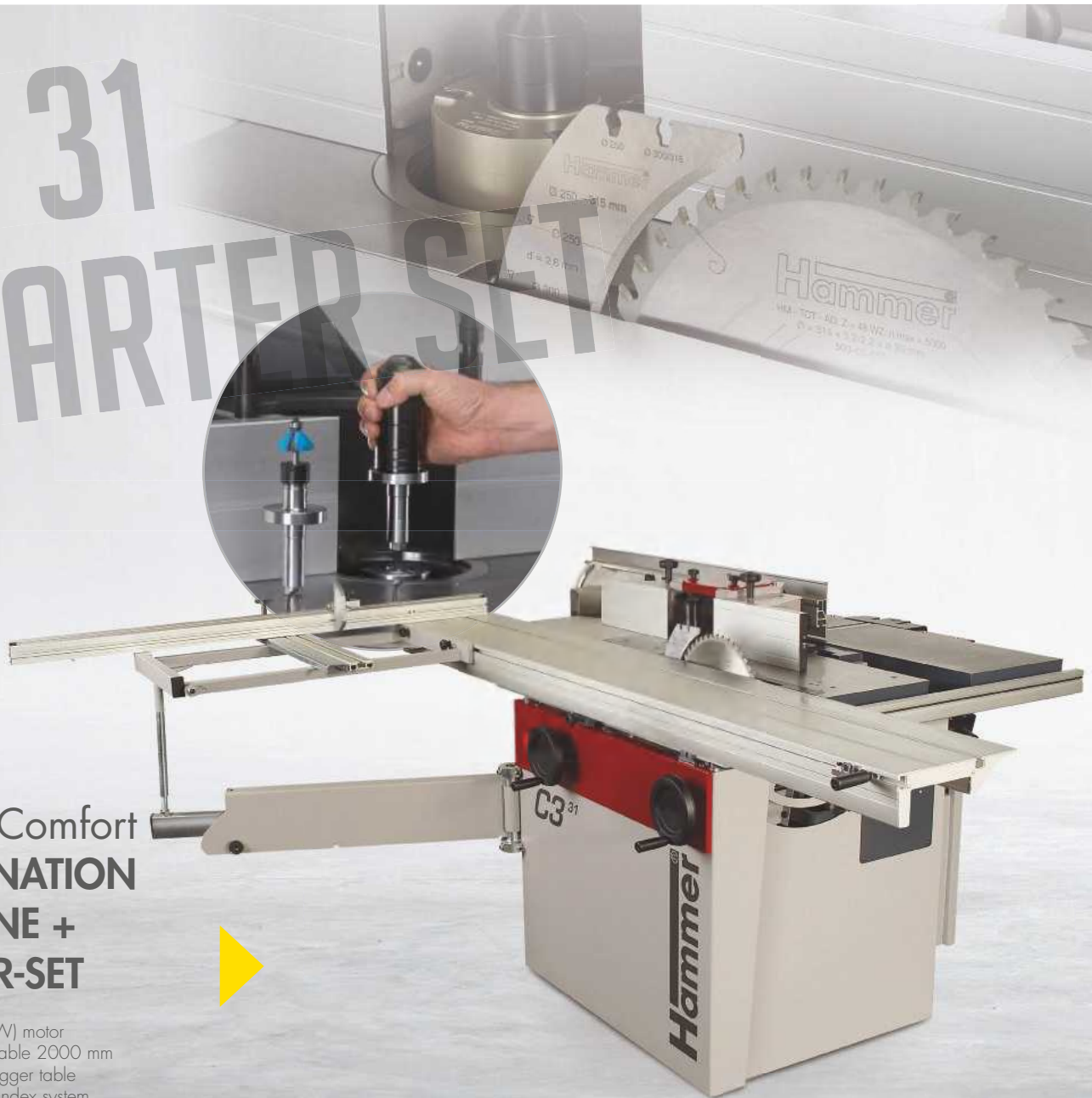




## ENTERING SHED OF THE YEAR 2016

The competition is now open!  
For more information and to enter your shed, visit [www.readersheds.co.uk](http://www.readersheds.co.uk) or follow [#shedoftheyear](https://twitter.com/shedoftheyear). We'll be covering all the 2016 entries and finalists over the coming issues, so stay tuned and good luck!

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# Good Woodworking Solutions



I haven't been to Japan – not yet, anyway – but to my occidental eyes, it has always seemed to be a culture that is at once quite different and yet vanishingly familiar; one that is set apart by its distinct values and traditions, yet which has become a comfortable part of our everyday life by virtue of its products. Try comparing an animation from, say, Pixar with a story told by Studio Ghibli and you can't fail to be struck by this 'familarly different' paradox. It's the same in engineering, where it's impossible not to admire Japan's finesse...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave'.

**Dave Roberts**, Consultant Editor

## A subtle magic?

...even if it did hasten the death of the plodding post-war British motorcycle industry with its innovation and precision – a combination that today's Triumph Motorcycles has embraced, but whose cutting-edge use of alloys, for instance, still makes much of Harley Davidson's work seem like, well, so much old iron. Sorry, Milwaukee.

Actually, it was iron that started this train of thought when I was at David Savage's school at Rowden recently (*GW298*), where Chris Schwarz touched on the subject of woodworking traditions. For while the origins of both occidental and oriental woodworking lie in the same place – Egypt – local factors have meant that their practices evolved in different ways, especially when it came to tool-making in Japan, which isn't blessed with great mineral resources.

### Precious iron

Though Japan obviously now imports the iron it needs, historically the ore was very difficult to source, to the extent, Chris explained, that it had to be sifted from the silt of stream beds. This scarcity made the supply of steel (of which



**David Savage** – a man who's passionate about Japanese planes

iron is a key component, of course) equally scant, and a resource that the Japanese husbanded carefully by making wooden-bodied tools, and developing ways to make their blades small – Japanese plane irons aren't as long as Western ones – and as thin as possible. Their saw blades are so thin, in fact, "that the only way they could withstand use," Chris said, "was to cut on the pull stroke," though eastern cultures, he adds, also have a tradition of sitting to work, which is conducive to pulling rather than pushing.

### A journey towards enlightenment

Now, I'm not remotely qualified to go all Zen about this, but I wonder whether that push/pull difference doesn't reflect an equally strong contrast in our attitudes or approaches to woodworking generally? While pushing a tool, especially in a standing position, allows a lot of force to be applied, that force can't be controlled with the same finesse (there's that word again) as it can in a tool that is being pulled towards you. The one approach rather



**Design necessity: a wooden body and economical use of steel**



Another Japanese tool, this time a knife, whose high-carbon steel takes an excellent edge, and flat back suits it beautifully to cutting veneers following a deep guide



suggests subjugation of the wood, while the other... well, I don't know; perhaps it suggests an altogether more subtle woodworking magic? I do know, though, that if you ask David Savage about his conversion to Japanese planes ("Whose beautifully sharpened edges go 'Whoosh!' and give you a five micron shaving!") in the pursuit of a finish that comes straight from the cutting edge and requires no sanding, he talks almost in terms of a journey towards enlightenment: "A Japanese plane is incredibly simple," David breathes, reverentially. "There are only three components: a body, a back iron, and a blade; there's no wedge or anything. Incredibly simple," he whispers, "but very sophisticated. The blade is tapered in every direction – from heel to toe, narrower at bottom than top, the top surface is concave, and the back is hollowed out. Same with the back iron, which is almost as sophisticated as the blade: laminated steel made to a specific shape, and its [leading] edge set one hair behind the cutting edge – no more! – to give the blade the stiffness it needs. The body is a block of Japanese oak that touches just in front of the blade, just on the toe, and maybe a little on the sides, but the heel is off.

"As a Japanese woodworker, the plane-maker would send you these three components and you'd be expected to bring them together as a working tool. But we Westerners don't know that; we don't have that knowledge, so we stumble. And that's why I wouldn't introduce Japanese planes to beginner woodworkers: they're too complicated," embodying a greater variety of cutting angles, and indeed irons of varying metallurgy to suit different planing actions

and different timbers, with one set of sharpening stones for white steel irons, another for the blue.

"They're a shorthand for an awful lot of hand tool skills," and to unpack all the cleverness that's built into them David believes that you have to have the understanding that comes of solid hand-plane skills. So, the way to approach them, he maintains, is to 'make your bones' with the Western planes first, because, "when you know what you're doing – and it's taken me a year or so to fathom it – (Japanese

planes) are brilliant. I've had a Norris plane for 40 years, and my new Japanese plane is way ahead, but I'm very glad I've come to it at 66, because I didn't get it at 33."

### The magic of Japanese tools

Back then, David – like many of us now, maybe – would perhaps have associated sharpness with shininess which, given what we all know about smooth surfaces being reflective, seems quite intuitive. But whereas man-made sharpening stones – which are an intermediate part of the process by which his Japanese irons are honed – raise the shine that's so suggestive of flatness and sharpness, the 8,000 to 10,000 grit natural stones that he uses for the final 'polish' give the steel a milky colour. The reason for this, David suggests, is that the natural stone sheds fine particles that are ground to even greater fineness as the iron is worked on the stone. The result is a slurry whose action scores the steel even as it hones. "And the Japanese have always said that the best surface is misty."

As I say, the magic of Japanese tools seems to be a subtle thing, something that requires experience to be appreciated. But while the Japanese do say that 'years know more than books', for those of us who'd like to steal a march on time and understand a little more right now, I gather that an excellent source of information is to found in Toshio Odate's *Japanese Woodworking Tools: Their Tradition*. And if you want David's suggestion for Japanese planes that are as close to usable out of the box as possible, look out for the tools of Tsunesaburo Hamono. [\[7\]](#)

## I wish I'd thought of that!

The fascinating thing about workshop solutions is that they're often the distillation of years of dissatisfaction with proprietary tools or materials, and experimentation in pursuit of A Better Way. In a place like Rowden, there's also a good chance that, when a fix is settled upon, it's been well and truly bench-tested by students and instructors alike. Take this tape dispenser, for example (the orange one), which Darren – one of Rowden's four teachers –



Darren's incredibly clever yet simple tape dispenser for working with veneers

uses when taping veneer into place. It has been cunningly modified by replacing the serrated cutter (the sort you can see on the blue dispenser) with a modified Stanley blade which, Darren explains, cuts the tape cleanly rather than creating a deckle edge. This means that, when it comes to peeling the bits of tape off the glued-up veneers, they come away in one piece, rather than being encouraged by the serrations to tear into endless maddening strips.

The tape itself, you'll also notice, is clear which, unlike conventional paper tape, makes it easier to check the fit of the veneers' edges as you lay them down. Darren uses a low-tack tape, but even so the effects of a veneer press can mean it sticks quite tenaciously, in which case a light pass with a warm iron (warm being the operative word) will soften the plastic tape's adhesive enough to make it easy to peel off.

Anyway, I'm just off to the patents office now; this thing's going to make me a million...



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Close-up of an almost complete model. Note the Master-Angle board resting against the leg of the table



**Michael Huntley** tells us about the Japanese carpentry masterclass he ran earlier this year and talks us through the process for marking out joints for hip rafters and wall-plates

# Japanese carpentry comes to Wiltshire

**I**n August, the first Japanese joinery masterclass in the UK was held in a small village in Wiltshire. It was organised by the Japanese Tool Group, run by Andy Ryalls and me at Phoenix Building Conservation near Salisbury. Andy and I met in 2011 and discovered a mutual interest in Japanese carpentry and tools. The appeal of Japanese woodwork is that the ethos of care, respect and balance permeates all aspects of the craft from tea house and temple building to furniture making.

## Japanese tradition

Unlike the European carpentry tradition, which had a break for about 600 years when the Romans left, the Japanese tradition had

a continuous development from 200BC to the present day. By the mid 7th century, Japanese carpenters were building structures that are still around today. We may wonder whether we need to understand Japanese carpentry but we cannot escape the fact that their tradition is one of the oldest and most successful in the world.

Mathieu Peeters, who taught the course and is the founder of Oostenwind, received his training in traditional Japanese carpentry at East Wind Inc. in California and apprenticed under Len Brackett, East Wind's CEO and Ryosei Kaneko, a Japanese tea house carpenter. Mathieu has worked extensively in Japan and around the world.

# Japanese joinery



▲ Pic.1 Japanese carpentry works on centrelines. The first job, once all the timber has been squared up, was for Mathieu to snap a centreline using a sumi-sashi ink line. We used American tulipwood from Sydenhams timber yard, Maiden Bradley, because it is stable and clean. More about marking out can be found on Mathieu's blog: <https://fabulalignarius.wordpress.com/2015/05/>

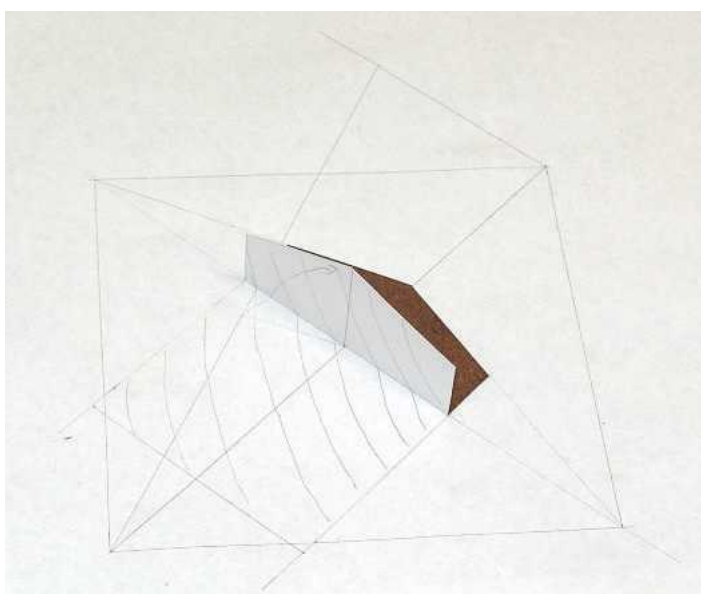
▲ Pic.3 Another new idea was to use paper triangles to identify the various angles in a 3D roof. All the angles are based on right-angled triangles, so each triangle can be drawn using the sashigane square and Pythagoras' Theorem. Sounds complicated but it isn't once you get going



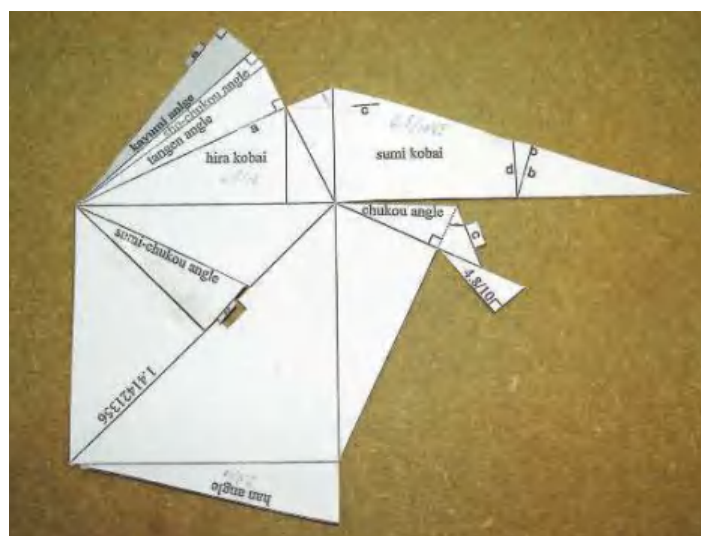
▲ Pic.2 Here Mathieu is using a scribing gauge. This was new to us and is very useful. They are available from [www.suzukitool.com](http://www.suzukitool.com)



▲ Pic.4 Here a paper triangle has been drawn using Pythagoras' Theorem and it is placed on the actual location where a layout line needs to be drawn, just below point (B1). This makes it easier to visualise how the layout lines relate to the 3D model. One of our group drew up a CAD version of the model, which could be rotated and all the main angles were shown in different coloured triangles



▲ Pic.5 This is the paper model for the backing cut on the hip rafter



▲ Pic.6 Here are all the different triangles used, based on a 'unit square'. All that is needed is the rise and run and everything else follows. This is not unique to Japanese carpentry of course; there are various Western ways of doing the same thing. However, as Japanese temple carpentry is a fine example of the craft, it is interesting to see how they do it



▲ Pic.7 Starting to cut the wall-plates for the model



▲ Pic.9 The standard Japanese position for chiselling. The wall-plate is raised up on blocks



▲ Pic.11 Another view of cleaning up the laps. Note the small number of tools on the bench. It is not how many tools you have but how you use them that counts

► Pic.8 Some people choose to work on the floor, which allows you to use your own weight to hold the timber. It is also easier on your back



▲ Pic.10 Lap joint floors were cleaned up with rebate planes. The American tulipwood was fairly kind to work



▲ Pic.12 A Japanese planing beam. This timber needed a couple of strokes with a finely-set plane to get it to fit

# Japanese joinery



▲ Pic.13 Killing the fibres. Just hammer the surface where the joint fits, insert the joint, and the natural moisture in the air will expand the fibres again for a really solid fit



▲ Pic.14 Cutting the housings for the Jack rafters



▲ Pic.15 Final fit – everything must be carefully aligned as the sections are large and the joints are tight



▲ Pic.16 Using a paring guide for the shoulders of the oblique lap cut on the underside of the hip




▲ Pic.17 Completed model and course participants

## Ko-kou-gen

This year's course was based around the concept of ko-kou-gen, the system of marking out joints for hip rafters and wall-plates. Although the majority of participants were timber framers by trade or inclination, the processes taught introduced a level of accuracy (0.25mm) that would be applicable to what we would define as joinery or cabinetmaking. In Japan the division of trades, and their appropriate accuracies, does not exist. A house builder is expected to be able to build the interior fittings and the furniture if required. One pleasing aspect of the course for me as someone about to retire was the high number of younger woodworkers who participated.

## The process

I hope the photos here have given you a flavour of the course. Another one is planned with the subject being furniture making in some aspect or another. Email me – [onehundredchisels@btinternet.com](mailto:onehundredchisels@btinternet.com) – to be put on the mailing list for courses and future meetings. I'll write more about Japanese tools, techniques and aesthetic over the coming issues. 





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# Getting scrappy!

**Mike Warren** shows you how to build this attractive and highly effective table using pieces of scrap wood



**I**t might be hard to believe, but this attractive end-grain table was made almost entirely with scrap wood. It looks amazing and is easy to make as the size of scrap wood you use doesn't matter, and you don't have to be too precise with your cuts.

The only parts of this project I bought were a 914mm section of walnut post and felt pads for the bottom of the feet; the rest was all leftover wood. Making an end-grain table from your own scrap pile is not only a great reuse, but gives any nice wood scraps you have a new life.

## Finding offcuts

We have a full wood shop at my work, with loads of people making all kinds of things. We have a 'leftovers' bin where larger pieces of wood can be stored and are free to use. Some of the wood in there is really nice, but usually too small to do anything useful with.

With the exception of the walnut corner/leg pieces, this end table was made from salvaged wood from the leftovers bin. I used a combination of softwood and hardwood, and

think I lucked upon some exotic wood, too! There were bits from old furniture, weird edge bits, and offcuts from projects that didn't work out (**Pic.1**). Some wood looked brand new and some looked like it had seen better days – all was fair game to be included in this table.

## Square & cut to size

This table used a lot of wood. Before you can get started you'll need to prepare each piece to make the assembly much easier.

Square up each piece of scrap wood using a planer or table saw, and cut the larger scraps into multiple pieces and down to more manageable dimensions. Knowing I wanted an irregular height bottom to my table, I deliberately chopped any similar length pieces to have different lengths. Those offcuts were also saved and used.

Since most of the wood doesn't have a common dimension, you're going to have lots of gaps, so you'll need thin pieces of scrap wood, too. Save all your offcuts – chances are you can use them to fill in gaps later.



▲ **Pic.1** Any offcuts will work for this project – raid the scrap bin and see what you can find!



▲ **Pic.2** To get an idea of placement, assemble your table upside down

## Corner legs

I had a really nice piece of walnut that I bought and thought it would be perfect in this project.

Marking the centre on the end, bisect the piece on the table saw, then rip the two halves in half again to create four equally square legs. Using a table saw sled, square the ends.

## Planning arrangement

Once you have your wood square, roughly arrange them by length. This table is built upside down, so you'll need a flat work surface to assemble the pieces. Before any gluing, arrange the cut wood vertically to get an idea of placement (**Pic.2**). It was here I realised that I could cut most of the pieces and create more surface area from the offcuts. I went for a design that had longer pieces in the centre and shorter pieces closer to the edges.

## Edge glue-up

Before starting any gluing, cover your work surface with paper. Since this table is constructed upside down, a lot of glue will drip from between the pieces – you don't want to glue your table to your work surface!

I planned my table surface to be 406mm square, so I made a template from a straight piece of wood that was marked at 406mm. Clamp, not glue, the walnut legs to the template (**Pic.3**) at the 406mm mark to make the boundary, then glue scrap wood to fill the space between the clamped legs using the template as a guide to keep the edge straight. Allow glue to dry completely. Repeat for each side of the table to create the table perimeter.

## Interior assembly

After the perimeter of the table is constructed and the glue has dried you can focus on



▲ Pic.3 Use clamps to hold everything together, with more pieces of scrap at the sides



▲ Pic.4 First, fill any gaps with straight wood, then cut off any plug ends using a coping saw



▲ Pic.5 Adding a level edge to the table top gives the router something to float on



▲ Pic.6 Use a hand-held sander to make the table top smooth, working through the grits up to 220



▲ Pic.7 Adding felt pads to the bottoms of the legs protects the project and your floor



▲ Pic.8 This table would make an ideal sofa end table or would look great in a hallway

building up the interior. Starting with shorter pieces closer to the edges, glue wood scraps to the perimeter and work your way inwards. Pay attention to wood height and try to space out similar types of wood.

Fill the entire interior of your table with scrap wood – you may have to reconfigure some of the pieces as you go along to create the best arrangement based on your scraps. Use clamps to keep the perimeter stable while you build the interior. When you can't get any more wood into the interior, let the glue dry overnight.

## Flip over

Once the glue is completely dry, flip the table over and peel off the protective paper. Despite my best efforts to fill the table with wood there are plenty of gaps, but don't worry as these can be filled in with thin scrap wood, this time with the table right side up.

## Fill gaps

With the table standing upright, fill in the gaps with more scrap wood. An easy way I found was to give small scraps a slight taper, allowing the tapered end to be inserted into the gap with a bit of glue to act as a plug.

Once all gaps were filled, allow the glue to dry completely overnight. You can then trim the plug ends with a coping saw (Pic.4).

## Router top – making level edging

Though the table was constructed on a flat surface, and it looks flat, there's a lot of variation on the surface. You'll need to router the top to make a flat and level top; this is easier and produces better results than just

trying to sand the top down. To rout the top you'll need to set up a level edge for the router to float on. Start by measuring 609mm from the ground, then nail a straight board level to one side. Repeat this on the opposite side to create level and parallel rails for the router to ride along (Pic.5).

Next, you need to make an extended table for the router to sit on in order to reach the parallel rails. My rails were 406mm apart so my router table needed to be at least double that in order to reach both sides. Using a long and thick piece of flat plywood, drill an opening in the centre for the router bit, then drill more holes for the router collar to be screwed into. I also made a spine on my router table to keep it from bowing during operation. Countersink all screws to hide the screw heads inside the piece and keep a level base for the router to glide on.

## Router top – levelling

With the router table and level parallel rails on the table, the surface can be levelled. Set the router depth to take off about 12mm, then carefully place the router on the rails and work around the entire surface of the table top. This table will take about 30 minutes to rout. Doing this also makes a huge mess, which is fun, but make sure you use appropriate dust extraction and PPE at all times.

## Sanding

After levelling the table surface you can start sanding. I began at 100 grit, then worked my way to 220 grit and got a very nice and smooth finish (Pic.6).

Because there's a mix of hard and softwoods in this project it sands unevenly, and care has to be taken not to sand too aggressively and

potentially create low spots where the softer wood is sanded faster.

## Sand edges & sides

Sand the edges and sides with 180 grit to get rid of any sharp parts and smooth any rough spots. I wanted to leave the sides mostly rough, as I think it adds to the character of the table, but this is entirely up to you.


## Finishing

To seal and protect the table, and to really make the end-grain pop, use a few coats of Danish oil. Wearing protective gear and working in a well-ventilated area, add Danish oil to a rag and rub into the table. After application, wipe off any excess Danish oil and after about an hour, apply a second coat.

## Felt feet

To protect the floor wherever this table ends up, and to make it easy to slide around, add felt pads to the feet of your table (Pic.7) – these can easily be sourced online.

## Place

Your scrap wood table is now ready to be placed (Pic.8). My table is about 609mm high and works perfectly as a sofa end table, and having it close to the front door of my apartment means it's sure to get plenty of adoring looks when people enter! 

### INSTRUCTABLES.COM

To see an online version of the table build and to download a PDF version of the project, see [www.instructables.com/id/scrap-ends-table](http://www.instructables.com/id/scrap-ends-table)



# Starry night

Simple and seasonal, **Phil Davy's** great little Christmas idea is a beautiful candleholder

**F**or a Christmas present or seasonal decoration that looks stunning and can be made in just a few hours, try this classic candleholder. The tea-lights cost next to nothing but create a really festive feel, and give you a perfect excuse to make the

holder from a timber with an interesting figure, which will be shown off nicely by the candlelight. I had a short piece of burr oak, which had been sitting in the workshop for several years waiting to be made into something special. The block was 200mm

square and 50mm-thick, but the size isn't critical; you can arrange the number and pattern of the holders to suit the material.

Tea-lights are 38mm in diameter, so the holes need to be drilled a tad larger and also slightly deeper than the candles to stop melting wax overflowing onto the top of the holder.

A 41mm Forstner bit will do the job; for accuracy, use a pillar drill if you have one, or a mains-powered drill mounted in a drill stand.

Before marking out the holes, plane and sand the block. A disc sander is the easiest way to get the ends square, while using a belt sander followed by a random orbit tool is a very effective way of smoothing wild grain.

When it comes to the drilling, if you're working a dense hardwood, take care not to plunge the bit too rapidly as this will cause the teeth to overheat and scorch the timber. Let the bit cool down between holes. Once the holes have been drilled you can apply a couple of coats of finishing oil, lightly sanding between each coat, followed by clear wax. **GW**



▲ Pic.1 Cut your timber to size, cleaning up sawn edges with a plane or disc sander; on wild grain a belt sander is an easy way to smooth the top. Mark two centrelines...



▲ Pic.2 ...then position several tea-lights on the hardwood block to give some idea of spacing. This is important if you want to end up with a regular geometric pattern!

# Christmas tea-light holder

© PHOTODISC/REUTERS



◀ Pic.3 Using a centre punch, mark the position of each tea-light – if the punch is worn, sharpen the tip to a fine point on a disc sander or with a file



◀ Pic.4 Insert a Forstner bit in the drill, tighten up and cramp the block to the base. Plunge the bit slowly into the timber, frequently withdrawing to clear the waste



◀ Pic.5 Once all the holes are drilled, sand the surface of the block with 240 grit abrasive. Remove dust and lightly dampen the timber with a cloth to raise the grain



◀ Pic.6 Lightly sand before cleaning and brushing on a coat of oil; remove the surplus after about 15 minutes. A second coat plus wax gives a lovely finish

▶ The completed festive-inspired candleholder



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# Around the House

with Phil Davy



Who'd have thought I'd still be here after 300 issues! I still remember the excitement and

anticipation when working on that very first issue. Taken on as Technical Editor, our first group test was scrollsaws.

A small attic office served as a temporary workshop in those early days, soon replaced with a much larger work area just down the road in Bath. Although with plenty of space, being upstairs presented its own problems, notably when it came to testing planer/thicknessers. It was no joke trying to get a cast-iron machine up the stairs!

There have been many changes to the magazine over the years, but we're grateful to everyone who has supported *Good Woodworking* from issue 1.

Phil Davy, Consultant Editor

## Book review

### Cabin Lessons

As woodworkers, a good few of us have probably at some stage had the romantic notion of constructing a shed or summerhouse as somewhere to escape life's

pressures. Building a family cabin on the banks of North America's Lake Superior may seem idyllic, though the tale described here is more hard graft, grit and tears than sentimental journey. The end result was obviously worth the considerable hassle involved, though.

Spike Carlson, Editor of a US DIY magazine, previously ran his own construction business, so certainly knows how to wield a saw and cut rafters. He describes the entire process in entertaining style, from finding and buying land to paint roller fights at the finishing stage of the build. It's very much a family affair, his wife equally at home designing the cabin and getting her

hands dirty with nailgun or hammer. Her experience of buying a first power tool, a random orbit sander, is enlightening. Who said colour was unimportant!



There are a handful of black and white photos and diagrams, enough to give a flavour of what the entire project's about. Should you want a break from poring over a typical woodwork guide, *Cabin Lessons* has plenty to set you thinking, whether it's reflecting on relationships, construction dilemmas or the joys of canoeing. This isn't *Grand Designs*; more Channel 4's *Amazing Spaces* with a little philosophy thrown in...



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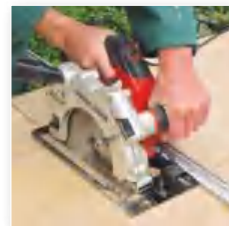
## Q&A

### Panel cutting

**Q** I need to cut up 8 x 4ft sheets of plywood and MDF on a fairly regular basis but have quite a small workshop, with no space for a table saw. Can you suggest the best way to do this accurately, please?

**A Beckett, Newcastle**

**A** With no table saw, the most efficient way is to use a portable circular saw. You'll need a guide clamp across the panel, available in lengths up to 1,270mm. For cutting lengthwise, secure a timber straightedge (or offcut from a board) to guide the saw. If you're feeling flush, a plunge saw and rail system is highly accurate, easy to use and



arguably safer than a conventional circular saw as the blade retracts when you finish cutting. Rails can be connected together so there's no need to cramp a straightedge. If you're able to cut materials outdoors

this will help, though you're obviously restricted by weather conditions. Don't forget to wear a face mask and preferably use extraction on the saw if cutting inside the workshop.

It's worth checking with your timber supplier or builder's merchant as they may have a wall saw. These cut very accurately (within about 1mm) and will save you a lot of work. You're normally charged per cut, though cost is minimal.



## Winter project

Takes: **A weekend**

**PICTURE FRAMES**

# You've been framed!

**Phil Davy** shows you how to make your own picture frames – the perfect Christmas present!



### Tools you'll need

Mitre saw (powered or hand), circular or table saw, router, hand tools

Although you can buy decent enough picture frames for just a few pounds at your local supermarket or online, they're often quite similar to one another.

Making your own means you can experiment with various woods and profiles, so they become more individual. They also make great presents, particularly when framing a favourite family photo or picture. They're cheap enough to produce if you've a few offcuts of suitable length, too. Assuming you have a suitable saw for cutting mitres accurately, all you need is glass and hardboard or MDF backing to complete. Contrasting vivid timber such as paduk with pale sycamore veneer looks quite dramatic and is easy enough to achieve.

### Mitre accuracy

To ensure good, tight joints it's essential that opposite sides of a square or rectangular frame are identical in length. If not, there's no way that mitres will close up without a gap somewhere. If using a powered mitre saw this

is relatively easy as you just need to cramp a stop in the correct position along the fence. If the frame sides are longer than the rear fence of the saw, plane up a long, straight backing board that can be cramped to this. You plunge the blade down through this board on the first cut.

Don't assume that the 45° mitre settings on your saw's protractor base are spot-on. With the machine unplugged, check the angle

between the blade and the rear fence with a rigid plastic set square or a digital angle finder. For greatest accuracy, it's better if you leave the blade position set up once you're happy with the accuracy of the cut. You can saw both left- and right-hand mitres simply by flipping the moulding over. Always rout rebates plus moulded profiles before sawing mitres. It's more accurate to do this on a router table, though a small hand-held palm router is fine for minor profiling. Make sure you assemble the frame on a completely flat surface, too. Don't assume a bench top is dead flat without checking it with a straightedge first.



**1** Plane the timber slightly thicker than the finished frame size. Saw the board to give narrow lengths, then plane their sawn edges



**2** Cut several veneer strips with a craft knife and straightedge. These should be slightly wider than the finished timber size



**3** Check the grain matches on each length and mark with a crayon. Spread PVA glue liberally on to each piece of wood



**4** Cramp the three lengths together, with veneer strips sandwiched in between. Adjust, as the timber will slide when tightening cramps



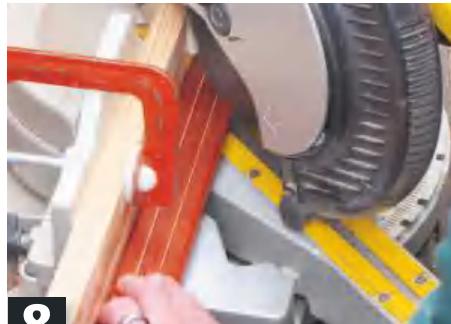
**5** Once the glue has dried, plane the face side, then thickness the timber so it finishes at 20mm



**6** Cut a rebate 10 x 7mm on the underside of the timber. It's easiest to do this on a router table with a straight bit



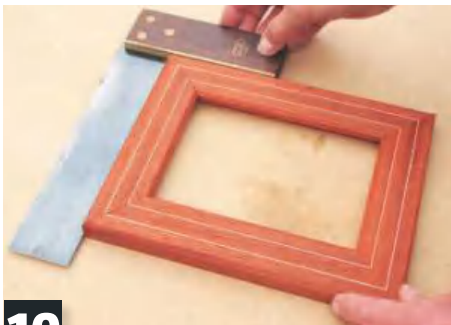
**7** Add decorative chamfers on both inside and outside edges. Use a bearing-guided chamfer bit in a palm router or table mounted



**8** Mark the frame pieces to approximate length and saw one end at 45°. Do this on each component



**9** Mark the first side to exact length and position against the mitre saw fence. Cramp a stop to the fence and cut two matching pieces



**10** Check that the frame is square. If not, trim with a finely-set bench plane and mitre shooting board



**11** Set out a Veritas cramp ready for the frame. Apply PVA glue to the mitres and position the pieces. Firmly tighten each corner adjuster



**12** Clean up the surfaces with a finely-set block plane, but if timber has interlocking grain, then use a cabinet scraper for final smoothing



**13** Brush on finishing oil and wipe off excess after a few minutes. Alternatively, simply apply a clear wax polish and buff



**14** Cut 2mm glass to size or order this from a glazier. A piece of 3mm hardboard or MDF is ideal for backing



**15** Insert glass followed by the photo. Either pin or clip the backing board into the rebate and attach hooks or a flap

## Techniques & tips



Top: The Nobex Champion saw is ideal for making a hexagonal frame

Left: Use a mitre shooting board with a finely-set bench plane to trim the sawn joint

# Sawing & trimming mitres

 I used a sliding mitre saw for cutting the mitres on the padauk frame, while I reverted to my trusty Nobex Champion saw for making a hexagonal frame. One of the advantages of using this saw is the indexed protractor base. Not only when making cuts at 45° and 90°, but the icons make it quick to select the correct angle for sawing precise mitres for five, six, eight and 12-sided frames. You don't even have to bother with a sliding bevel; the angles here are spot-on.

If you need to trim a sawn joint, perhaps the most accurate method is to use a mitre shooting board with a finely-set bench plane.

One of the most useful workshop aids, you can build one from MDF or birch ply for longer life. My board has a removable triangular section, which is screwed halfway along its length. For trimming timber at 45° it works well, assuming the plane is nicely honed. For trimming end-grain at 90°, simply unscrew the triangle and revert to the hardwood stop across the end.

A disc sander is another way of trimming mitres accurately, particularly if your machine has a sliding fence. Don't forget that opposite sides of a frame must be identical, so check each pair for length and trim both pieces if necessary.

## Veritas four-way speed clamp

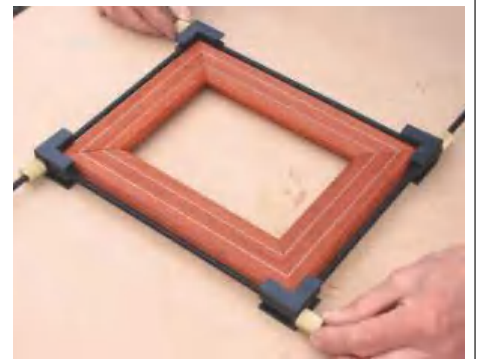
 This is quite an expensive clamp, but capacity is pretty impressive and it works a treat. Consisting of four steel rods, each length is screwed into a sturdy, glass-filled nylon corner block. These in turn enable the adjacent rod to slide through it at 90°. Brass speed clamping nuts are tightened against the corners to provide pressure when assembling a frame. Because the knurled nuts have offset threads, you can slide them along the rods rapidly, threads only biting when they reach a solid corner.

It's only possible to clamp up square or rectangular frames, but the Veritas system does this particularly well. In standard format it will accommodate a frame up to 585mm square. Four extension rods are included, which increases the already sizeable capacity to 1,115mm square, or a rectangle 585 × 1,650mm. When not in use, the kit is quick to dismantle and store, while cramping is fast and solid.

★★★★★

Price: £34.96

Web: [www.axminster.co.uk](http://www.axminster.co.uk)



Brass speed clamping nuts can be tightened against the corners to provide pressure when assembling a frame



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## Nobex framing cord clamp



For occasional framing work this clamp from Nobex is cheap enough and easy to use. It consists of 2.5m of nylon cord, which is threaded through a series of flexible plastic corners. Tensioning is achieved by pulling the cord taut and locking it off through a specific grooved block. With eight corners included, you can cramp pentagons, hexagons and octagons, as well as squares and rectangles. I'm not sure how long these corners will last, though, as they're thinly hinged. This is to enable them to flex to different angles, depending on the number of sides to the frame.

A simple, budget cramping system for occasional use, then. If you only want to cramp up conventional four-sided frames, a kit with just four corners costs £6.25.



Price: £8.95

Web: [www.axminster.co.uk](http://www.axminster.co.uk)



Tensioning is achieved by pulling the cord taut and locking it off through a specific grooved block



The fence grips the saw blade while still allowing it to move back and forth



'V' nails can be hammered in with the aid of an insertion tool

## Axminster picture framing kit



If you're keen to start making your own frames but don't have specialist tools, then this kit is an ideal way to start. It includes all you need, from actually cutting the mitres and cramping the joints to finishing off with various eyes, pins, wire and even small picture hangers.

There's even a handpoint mitre saw included (305mm blade), used in conjunction with a sturdy alloy mitre cramp. You can either fix this to a baseboard or secure it to a table top with a removable threaded screw. Only 45° mitres are possible. Maximum moulding capacity possible is 77mm, though I'm not sure the saw would cope too well cutting this size. For sawing mitres, a rigid plastic fence is fixed to the cramp assembly with a hex key. Containing several magnets, the fence grips the saw blade while still allowing it to move back and forth. While this enables the blade to remain vertical, I found there was still slight blade flexing when making an initial cut across the moulding.

Still, it's a help if you have no other means of sawing mitres.

Once you've sawn matching left and right mitres you can position them tight together in the cramp, though you'll probably need to trim the faces first. Then you can use 'V' nails across the joint, hammered in with the aid of an insertion tool. On the downside, you can only cramp up one corner at a time, though if using 'V' nails, this is still quite fast as no glue is needed.

As well as a 'V' nail insertion tool (and two sizes of nails), there's also a frame point tool and tabs provided for securing a backing board once picture and glass are in the frame. This fairly comprehensive kit is supplied in a plastic case and Axminster sell a range of fittings to top up when items run low.



Price: £37.96

Web: [www.axminster.co.uk](http://www.axminster.co.uk)

## Out & about: Cornish Christmas

# Driftwood Christmas tree



It was my wife Jan's idea, really. Returning to our favourite beach in Cornwall back at Easter, we were amazed at just how much driftwood was scattered across the beach (Pic.1). Perfect for a barbecue in summer, perhaps, but a bit too early in the year for that. Having seen various decorative driftwood items in home stores, a Christmas tree seemed a great way to give the house a maritime feel during the festive season.

Although it's illegal to remove rocks or pebbles from British beaches these days, as far as I'm aware this doesn't apply to driftwood. I could be wrong, but thought it worth the risk. After all, beachcombing could be interpreted as simply clearing litter... You could just as easily use dead branches found in woodland areas, though it's probably not a good idea to go hacking them off a perfectly healthy tree.

## Tree construction

For Christmas tree height you're only restricted by the length of the centre rod (Pic.2). I used a 1m length of M8 (8mm) steel studding, though it would probably work just as well with a piece of dowelling. You could use 6mm rod for a smaller tree, though the thinner the studding gets, the more it will flex.

Simply drill a clearance hole through the middle of each branch with a flat or dowel bit, (Pic.3) then stack them on the rod. You may need to add a couple of feet to the bottom branch to help stability. It took about 40 branches to complete the 1m height, though obviously this depends on the diameter of each piece. For storage, you can rotate the branches so they roughly line up, or dismantle the tree and have a barbecue!

The cost for this taste of Cornwall at Christmas was about £2.50 for the studding, plus cream tea expenses as payment for collecting the material! **GW**



▲ Pic.1 It only took a few minutes to gather this driftwood from the beach. Who knows the age of the timber or where it originated...



▲ Pic.2 Measure each branch and mark the approximate centre point. This is definitely not fine woodworking!



▲ Pic.3 A bradawl is handy to start each hole. Drill right through every branch with a flat or dowel bit



▲ Pic.4 The studding should be a tight fit in the bottom branch. Enlarge holes in the remaining wood if necessary



▲ Pic.5 Alternate short and long branches as you thread them on to the studding. Fit an M8 nut at the top to finish off



▲ Pic.6 Decorate the tree with baubles, lights or just leave it unadorned. It would look great in a porch or outdoors

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# Good Woodworking

# Letters

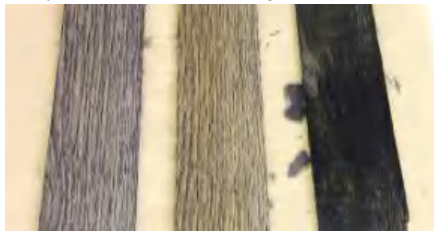
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Email: [tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com](mailto:tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com)

## Staining with iron and vinegar

Hi, I have just watched a guy on YouTube showing how to make an ebony stain by soaking '0000' grade wire wool in clear vinegar for about a day. The liquid turned a dark brown and he then took the wool out, let it dry, crumbled it and put it back in. After two or three days it was very black and the wool seemed to have dissolved. He painted it on a piece of softwood (not sure which type) and it seemed to take the colour very well, but he didn't say if it just stained, whether it soaked in deeper, whether it sanded well or whether it needed reapplying after sanding.

Regards,  
Martyn Williams

*If you Google 'iron and vinegar wood stain' you will find quite a lot about this process. I am aware of this technique and have tried it, but it depends on the amount of tannin in the wood. In order to get a good*

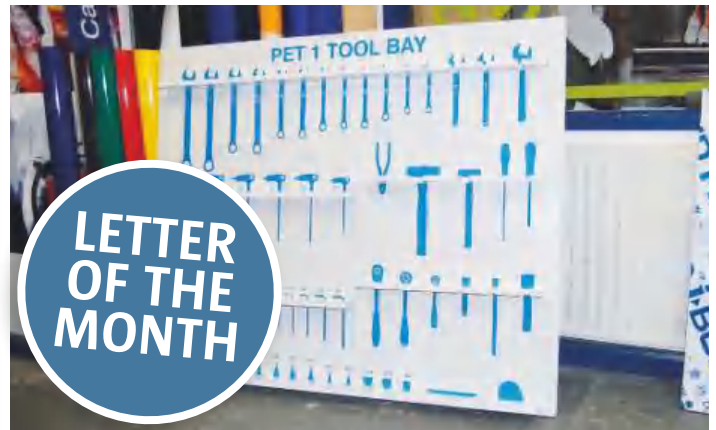


*result you may need to add tannin to the timber. By the time you've done that you might as well buy a proprietary stain. If you do want to make your own stains, then Wood Finishing with George Frank is a good book to read. Always take care and wear safety*

**You can find lots of useful videos on YouTube – simply Google 'iron and vinegar wood stain'**

*specs. The glass jar should not be stoppered otherwise the gas produced will cause an explosion. The resulting stain will only be surface deep, so all shaping will need to be done before staining. The stain will probably raise the grain, so you will also need to raise the grain and paper back before application. The reason for using these old-fashioned stains is so that the grain of the wood is visible, but for ebonying you usually want a deep black, which is why a proprietary black dye followed by black polish is normally used.*

**Michael Huntley**



A modern version of a tool shadow board

## Tool shadow boards

Dear Tegan,

I enjoyed reading about Tony Sutton's tool cabinet project in August's issue of *GW*. It reminded me of the hand tool storage/display boards that I saw both in RAF engineering and aircraft maintenance hangers and at civil aircraft maintenance centres that I had worked in/visited during my career, though of course there weren't many woodworking tools on display on those boards. These were described as 'tool shadow boards' and basically had a silhouette of each tool painted on the board behind the tool. The main idea was based around safety; to see at a glance if any tools were missing at the end of a work shift and which might therefore have been left inside some vital part of the aircraft. It also had the advantage that it was very easy to put the tool back in the correct place.

Of course, where expensive tools are used in a communal workplace it also had the advantage of dissuading 'permanent' borrowing! The boards I remember were invariably painted with two very contrasting colours: a white or pale blue background with day-glow orange silhouettes. Some of these boards (in pairs back to back) were mounted on castor wheel trolleys that could easily be moved around as needed.

Looking at Tony's finished storage/display cabinets it occurred to me that when several tools, especially of similar type/shape, were removed from the cabinet and being used on a project, that it might be a little difficult to subsequently recognise the correct places to put the tools back on. However, if there was an outline or silhouette of the tool painted on the back panel or stuck on with sticky-backed plastic, then you would instantly see what goes where. I always thought these 'tool shadow boards' looked impressive and professional at the time and if the majority of home hobbyists see little merit in this, then perhaps semi-professional or full-time woodworkers might see the benefits?

Regards,  
Werner Cook

*What a fascinating glimpse into the past, Werner! Thank you for sharing and also for your thoughts on making Tony's project even better by incorporating a few tweaks here and there!*

**Tegan Foley**

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## WRITE & WIN!

We always love hearing about your projects, ideas, hints and tips, and/or like to receive feedback about *GW*'s features, so do drop us a line – you never know, you might win our great Letter of the Month prize, currently a Trend Snappy Colour Ring bit set. Write to the address on the left for a chance to enhance your marking capability with this versatile workshop aid



Above: 'Black Swan' – a contemporary take on a Georgian demilune side table

Left: A piston-fitted 'secret' drawer with a solid ebony bead framing the central marquetry panel

## Black swan demilune

Made by Australian-born furniture-maker Paul Chilton, this stunning piece is a contemporary take on a Georgian demilune side table.

In addition to the ballet references in this design – the dynamic poise of the legs, the Swan Lake-inspired contrast between their striking black colour and the restrained, warmth and elegance of the pear wood sunburst top – 'Black Swan' also embodies more personal inspiration for the designer. The piece's oak legs are poised in dance, flexing in a compression – fitting of either the corroboree or the ballet, or of course the curvature of the neck of a swan. Ebonised by the natural reaction of the oak's tannins and iron oxide, the striking black of the legs could equally be a nod to the charred trunks of an Australian summer bush fire.

The top, made from English pear wood with its gentle autumnal hues, subtle figure and manicured sunburst, rests with restrained proportions atop the legs and the visual separation

between the two is challenged by the legs cutting up and through the carcass to the top. In keeping with the avian aesthetic, feathers that have been stylised from the lyre bird wrap sweepingly around the top, in Paul's own original marquetry design made especially for the piece.

Having spent a year studying with David Savage, Paul recently moved back to Australia where he is in the early stages of establishing his own workshop as an independent designer-maker. See [www.paulchilton.com](http://www.paulchilton.com).

*I absolutely love the elegant poise of this piece and the addition of the marquetry finishes it off perfectly. The feather detail looks almost lifelike; the contrast of the light-coloured top to the striking black of the legs is so effective and the little details on the drawers are stunning. David has clearly done a fantastic job in teaching this highly skilled student. Congratulations!*

**GW in conversation with designer-maker Paul Chilton**

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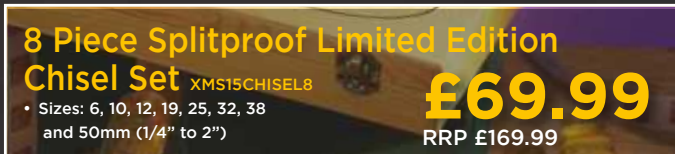
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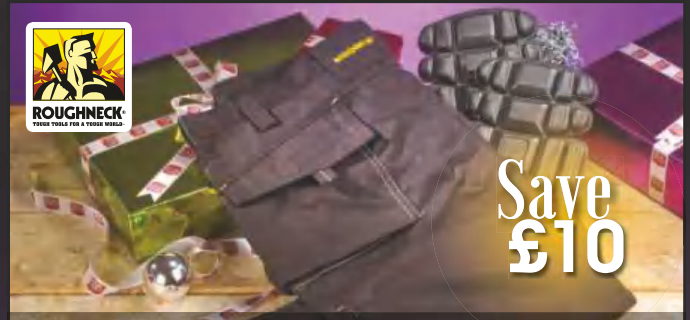
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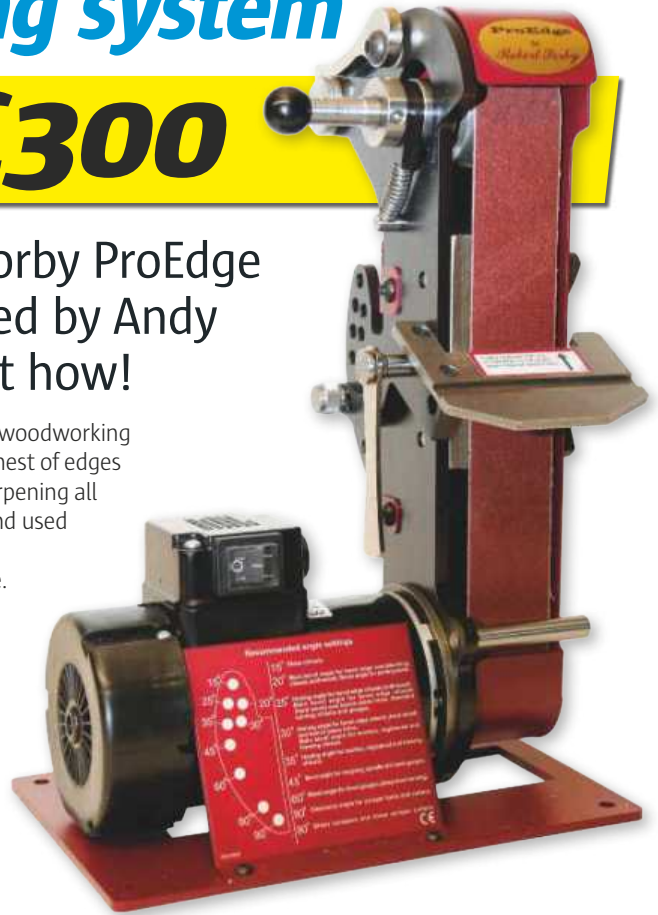
Fancy winning your very own Robert Sorby ProEdge Plus deluxe sharpening system, as tested by Andy King in issue 299? See below to find out how!

The ProEdge from Robert Sorby represents the ultimate system for sharpening your woodworking tools. Its unique design incorporates many years of experience in producing the keenest of edges accurately and efficiently. The ProEdge takes all the guesswork and effort out of sharpening all your woodworking tools and requires no complex assembly – it can be plugged in and used straight from the box.

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# Turning festive



**Les Thorne** gets in the mood for Christmas and shows you how to turn three fun decorations for your tree

**I**n the course of my turning year I make a huge diversity of stuff from little tiny buttons up to large-scale mouldings and columns. I post a lot of photos of my work on Facebook and Instagram and get quite a good response from people. Amazingly, these pieces have created a bigger response from my non-woodturning friends than any other thing I've shown them. It goes to prove that Christmas is huge business, even in early October when I wrote the article! If I was still doing craft fairs, I think I would forget the arty stuff and just make lots of snowmen.

These particular pieces are not really my design – they are a mix of projects and work that I have seen over a period of time. Whether you colour or paint the work is completely up to you. If you do decide to paint them, then make sure you use a piece of plain timber such as white beech or tulipwood and ensure to seal them first.

The scale of the snowman and the tree can be adjusted quite easily and they could both be made from green timber and allowed to crack and split naturally. Wet wood is difficult to paint but will take a stain reasonably well. Have fun with these projects and I'd love to see some photos of the versions you've made! [GW](#)



## Icicle



▲ Pic.1 Having not made anything like this for a number of years, I decided to test out my drawing skills – this gave me an idea of what size of timber to use



▲ Pic.2 Because I was planning to go very thin, I decided to hold one end in a chuck. About 8mm of timber right at the end is wasted, so I take that down with the 10mm skew chisel



▲ Pic.3 I like to size a piece before I start the shaping. Here, I've taken the wood down in stages without making it too weak. Take it steady and you should avoid too much vibration



▲ Pic.4 It's that time again to support it with your finger. My left finger is underneath the toolrest and just touching the wood; this will help you to turn very thin and is safe as long as your digits are behind the wood



▲ Pic.5 The steps are cut in with the 10mm round skew. Present the point of the tool to the work with the handle low; as you lift the tool it will slice into the wood and give you great definition and a good finish



▲ Pic.6 The bulbous bit at the top of the icicle is a simple bead. The pencil line in the centre is a guide for me to turn the bead evenly – the spindle gouge is perfect for this, but use the skew if you are confident in doing so



▲ Pic.7 Holding one end in the chuck means you only have to put very light pressure on the tailstock. The piece is very weak now so you have to be very careful in taking the top down



▲ Pic.8 Removing the waste from the tailstock with the lathe running is best done with a skew. Turn the lathe off and cut off using a pen knife, but be careful not to pull out the fibres



▲ Pic.9 Greens and reds are traditional colours so brush and spray on a mixture of spirit stains. Felt-tipped pens would also work well. This is a great project for kids to colour in



▲ Pic.10 Next, spray some gold and silver paint onto the work and you will find this gives you an interesting mottled effect, which I think looks really good



## Christmas tree



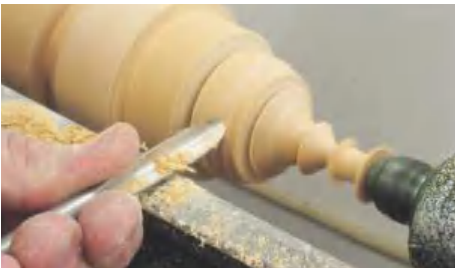
▲ Pic.1 This project is a great way of using up your scrap wood. Turn it round, put one end in the chuck and mark lines that decrease in width



▲ Pic.2 Start to make the shape of the tree in a block form. Don't take the trunk down too far at this stage as it will weaken the piece



▲ Pic.3 Make a slicing cut with the 3mm parting tool, with the point cutting above centre. If the tool starts to bind, make a relief cut to one side



▲ Pic.4 Each one of the sets of branches is a simple half a cove. Keep the bevel of the tool rubbing throughout the cut for a good finish



▲ Pic.5 Keep the flute at 2 o'clock as the gouge runs down the curve. The flute will need to go over to 3 o'clock as you near the larger diameter



▲ Pic.6 Make the tree container look like half a barrel. A simple taper with some grooves cut in it gives a good and easily achievable effect



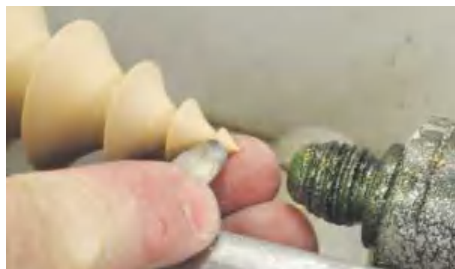
▲ Pic.7 Mask off the tree and spray or paint the base black or brown. Use the 10mm skew chisel to cut down the stem to the required diameter



▲ Pic.8 To improve the finish on the underside of the branches, make a very light cut with the skew on its side, to create a shear cutting effect



▲ Pic.9 Using the gouge in a bevel rubbing cut will give a good finish. First, check the tool will fit easily in the place where you want it to go



▲ Pic.10 Next, remove the support from the tailstock. If you are confident, turn the top down to a point and use your finger as support



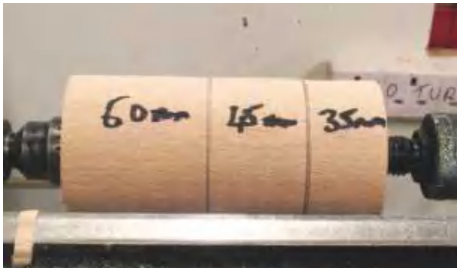
▲ Pic.11 Here I used a green spirit stain but a mottled effect of green and a wood coloured stain will also work very well



▲ Pic.12 Here I used brown oak spirit stain for the trunk. Part the piece off and finish the bottom with a sanding pad



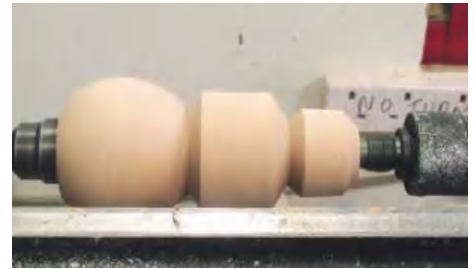
## Snowman



▲ Pic.1 Take a piece of beech measuring 70mm in diameter, or scale it up. Next, simply mount up the body between centres



▲ Pic.2 Make 'V' cuts on the marks and round over the three beads for the body. Start with the handle low and lift as you work through the cut



▲ Pic.3 Make all the cuts with the skew to mark out the positions of the beads. On beech, I find the gouge leaves a great finish



▲ Pic.4 Here the long point of the skew is used to cut the curve; this will require some practise, but it is incredibly satisfying once mastered



▲ Pic.5 The waste at the tailstock end doesn't need to be taken down any lower than that. The waste can then be cut off with a saw



▲ Pic.6 To make the hat, mount up a small screw chuck; this is ideal as the hat will need a hole in it and you can utilise that to hold onto



▲ Pic.7 Use a 60 x 60mm piece of sapele, which can be screwed and shaped with a gouge. I decided to go for a Dickensian-style top hat



▲ Pic.8 Cut the end-grain with the gouge, so the bevel is in contact with the wood. Slow the feed speed of the tool towards the centre



▲ Pic.9 After sanding down to 400 grit, cut back with synthetic fine wire wool. Give the hat a coat of sanding sealer followed by black lacquer



▲ Pic.10 Place the hat at a jaunty angle. Sand the head of the snowman off just enough for the hat to fit at an angle – I did this by eye



▲ Pic.11 Drill a hole at an angle in the head, use a double-ended screw and attach using a little PVA glue



▲ Pic.12 The nose is a 6mm piece of maple with a 4mm peg. Stain orange using spirit stain and glue it into the head



▲ Pic.13 Create the eyes, mouth and buttons using a pyrography machine, or you could turn them if you wish





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**A**s winter fast approaches, you may well have already noticed the drop of temperature in your workshop. By the time winter truly arrives, it's likely to feel as if you're working in a freezer every time you set foot in your workshop. Keeping your workshop properly heated is a serious business, because working in an unheated space can leave you with sore and aching fingers and muscles, leading to a reluctance in heading outdoors to do any woodworking at all. The cold temperatures can also prevent your wood glue and finishes from drying correctly, meaning that even when you



Even in the depths of winter, your workshop can still be usable if you kit it out with appropriate insulation – obviously a warm jumper also helps!

do go outside, the cold could have a negative effect on the quality of your work. So how exactly should you keep your workshop warm during the winter months? Below are some hints and tips, which I hope you'll find useful.

## The importance of insulation

Good insulation can affect the warmth of your workshop without the expense of actually paying for heating. It seems obvious, but you should ensure that you close your workshop door firmly when you're inside – every little bit of trapped warmth helps! Thoroughly insulating your workshop will help to prevent any vital heat exiting through windows and skylights, and ensure that the cold air can't get in. If you're on a very tight budget, then even some DIY insulation around your windows and doors will make a big difference to the warmth of your workshop while costing very little.



A glowing woodburner and a basket full of logs – heaven!



**Gemma Hunt** suggests a number of ways in which you can keep your workshop warm this winter and shows you a selection of woodburning stoves, all perfect for the job

## Installing a heating system

If your workshop is very cold and you have the budget to solve the problem, then installing a heating system is your best option for keeping warm in the winter. The right heating solution for you will depend on the size of your workshop and the amount of time you tend to spend in it each week. If you have a small

workshop that you only spend a couple of hours in over the course of the weekend, for example, it could well be that a small space heater will provide all of the heat you need. However, if your workshop is large and you spend a lot of time in it then you will probably need a heating system that is professionally installed. You should never choose to install a heating system yourself unless you are a



All stocked up and ready for the cold months ahead



It's important to store logs so they stay dry during winter – an undercover log store is ideal

## Know your woodburner

### Relax Woodburning Workshop & Greenhouse Stoves

This range allows you to heat your workshop, greenhouse, garage, shed or industrial unit. The range includes seven sizes and heat outputs from the relax R1 at 4kW to the mighty R7 supplying 24kW of heat.

■ [www.thehotspot-shop.co.uk](http://www.thehotspot-shop.co.uk) ■ [www.workshopheaters.co.uk](http://www.workshopheaters.co.uk)

### Cast-iron woodburning stoves and multi fuel stoves

Clarke (or rather Machine Mart) sell some very inexpensive stoves, including the 7kW Boxwood. Although they are manufactured in China, the quality is respectable.

■ [www.machinemart.co.uk](http://www.machinemart.co.uk)

### Greenheart

Greenheart workshop stoves come in seven different sizes, so you can make your choice of stove and flue system depending on the size of your workshop. The Greenheart stoves start at a compact 4kW stove, which comfortably heats up to 65 cubic metres, ranging up to the 18kW workshop stove, which heats up to 250 cubic metres.

■ [www.workshopstoves.co.uk](http://www.workshopstoves.co.uk)

### Dowling Firebug

The Dowling Firebug is a 12kW workshop stove that would also look good in a rustic domestic setting. Dowling's stoves occupy the borderland between domestic and industrial.

■ [www.dowlingstoves.com](http://www.dowlingstoves.com)

### Oakfire

Solidly built and robust, Oakfire workshop stoves are made right here in the UK. These stoves are designed specifically to burn sawdust, shavings, offcuts and other timber. They feature a unique Double Air Tube, as well as primary and secondary air vents.

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### Tecnik stoves

Tecnik stoves are one of the UK's leading manufacturers of workshop stoves. These are designed predominantly for the carpentry workshop to burn sawdust, wood shavings and solid timber. Available in 8, 12, 20 and 24kw versions they are simple to operate and the heat output can be easily controlled.

■ [www.tecnikstoves.co.uk](http://www.tecnikstoves.co.uk)

qualified contractor or feel very confident in the process: even the safest of heating systems could be very dangerous if the heater and vents aren't installed in exactly the right locations.

## Woodburning stoves

Most of us don't have the budget to kit out our workshops with the latest bells and whistles heating system, and this is where the woodburner comes in, although these also come with their own safety concerns. Workshops and sheds are classed as 'temporary structures' and are therefore not regulated in quite the same way as an appliance being fitted to a building. Manufacturers still have an obligation for the appliance to be 'fit for purpose' and the installer has a 'duty of care'; however, the building regulations (Document J) do not apply. Again, these are all things that need to be researched before you decide on which system best suits you. There is a wide variety of woodburning stoves on the market now, many of which are specifically designed for workshops (see sidebar opposite). As you'll see, there's something to suit everyone.

## Safety concerns

Of course, no matter what kind of heating system you choose to install in your workshop, there are safety concerns to consider, and safety should be the most important factor when choosing your heating system. Some heaters have open flames or red-hot elements as part of the heating process while there are others that do not. Obviously looking for a system that doesn't include any open or red-hot elements is important in a wood shop full of timber scraps, solvents and sawdust (something even the tidiest of workshops can't avoid having all over the floor at some point). It may well be worth calling your insurance provider before you install a heating system in your workshop, in order to ensure that it will be covered and protected by your policy in the very unlikely event that anything should happen. Reading reviews from other woodworkers who have installed the same system you are looking at in their own workshops may also help to relieve any safety concerns that you have.

Another important factor is ensuring you contact your local authority's Building Control department as you want to be certain you won't be breaching any regulations; this could also potentially affect any insurance claims, so is worth researching thoroughly. Regulations differ from city to city, as well as from country to country, and it pays to know which of these do or do not affect you.

Warming your workshop for the winter doesn't have to be complicated. However, it is important that you go through all the relevant safety procedures and have your system installed by a professional in order to ensure that you're keeping your workshop as safe (and as warm) as possible. **GW**



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The keel of a yacht being re-secured – a collector's piece in this fibreglass age



# The Sails of Hope

A dream to start a project rebuilding and re-floating pre-war wooden sailing ships to aid a local maritime community is now thriving in its 25th year, and at its heart? Carpenters! **Barrie Scott** reports here

**N**ormandy's Alabaster Coast is boat enthusiasts' country and always has been. From shellfish harvesting, yacht racing and pirate legends, right up to the ferries that keep us in the UK supplied with cheese and wine, all was historically founded upon the work of the region's boatbuilders.

## Rescue & restore

The early 1990s saw an upsurge of interest in pre World War II wooden sailing ships that



How to secure a mast. Strutted, braced and bracketed. Note the octagonal shape at the fixing point to restrain it from twisting

once worked the Normandy coast. They are the last generation of the old-style boats, many ending their days half sunk in creeks along the French seashore. François Charbonnier, director of 'Les Voiles d'Espoir' (The Sails Of Hope), and a team of volunteers, founded a movement to rescue and restore such a vessel in the town of Fécampe. The idea was to involve some local young people whose lives had become directionless, in a community that perhaps the modern world had left behind. Many had been in care, had little education and their horizons were limited. They were to be introduced to boatbuilding skills connecting them with the history of their coastline by working among people who enthuse about the subject.

## 'School of the Second Chance'

To take a once robust seagoing vessel, faithfully restore it to a state where it can be re-registered for use and then take them to sea offered the youngsters a journey that Charbonnier describes as the 'School of the Second Chance,' seeing how things are made and can also be repaired: "Being three days from land, under sail, they learn to co-operate, check their pride



The bowsprit where the foresail is secured

and it brings out their human qualities." After 25 years the group have achieved the restoration of five such vessels. The task is now backed by the local Round Table, the Chamber of commerce and various government agencies. The small fleet of old-fashioned working sail-boats brings in tourists from across France and beyond for pleasure cruises, adventure holidays, etc. The youths come out the other end with certificates of competence and good attitudes. Also, if they want it, a solid foundation to become master boatbuilders.

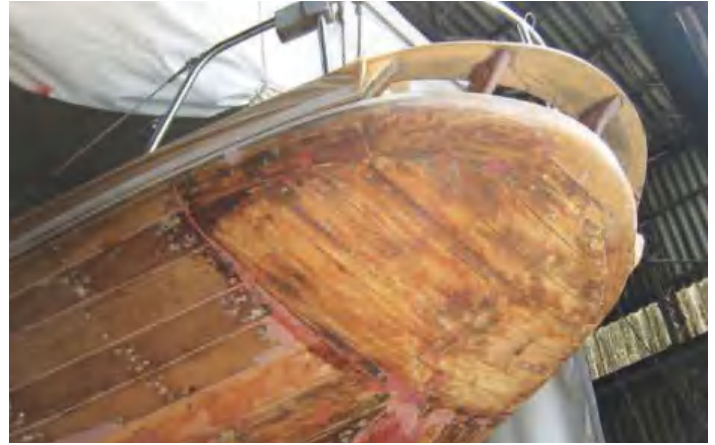
In short, the dreams and philosophical talk have paid dividends. The group is now known as ASDAM – 'Association Fécampoise Pour le



# Rebuilding wooden sailing ships in Normandy



It's a long way down when the boat is hoisted above the keel



This old craft was in for a cheap fibreglassing refurb. Sandrine was ashamed at the cost-cutting exercise, which will only superficially extend its life



Wooden washers to bolt on the iron keel – a basic device but note the shaping, which follows that of the hull

Something a bit more modern being refitted



Développement des Activités de Mer'. (There are translatable websites under this title.)

## Carpentry expertise

Large wooden boats involve specialised carpentry, which necessitated the employing of carpenters with the right backgrounds to oversee the project. Sandrine Tannec was one. She spent a few years providing carpentry expertise as part of the ASDAM crew. Now she has her own business as part of a three person cooperative running a boatyard situated along the coast in Dieppe. However, she greatly valued her experiences at Fécampe. The cause was a positive one and the work itself gave her the opportunity for involvement in challenging projects seeing major reconstruction through from the design stage to the finish. The earliest assessments would talk in terms of how many thousands of working hours were predicted.

Sandrine is from a seagoing family on the Caribbean island of Martinique. Like many 'yachties', sailing and boatbuilding was in her blood from an early age and the bulk of her adult career has been in teaching her skills. Currently, her boatyard provides a repair and maintenance service to wooden yachts as well as the local fishing fleet.

## Functional VS fine finish

The woodwork in boatbuilding lacks some of the precise complexities of joinery. Much is bolted and rove-nailed together rather than jointed; appearances are mostly functional rather than fine-finish as with furniture making. Steam-bending of hull timbers is possibly the most complex operation but the know-how in the structure and weathering of a boat is

extensive. Nasdam has saved some of these Normande traditions from extinction – along with the boats.

In the Dieppe workshop some basic refurbishment work was under way. Getting the boat in position and secure before even starting work, especially those with keels, is a major operation needing experience.

The boathouse has a long history in the small vessel trade. It has a slipway, heavy winching gear and can accommodate and take on sizeable boats. I even spotted some old kit inherited from a previous owner. Very few now use wooden jawed vices but they're tough and several are still used daily. The machinery is on a large scale; the sanding bobbin had a 3m bed for shaping the hefty hull ribs.

Work was underway securing the iron keel of a sporting wooden yacht. They were replacing timber washers of about 50 x 50 x 200mm with a 20mm hole to take the steel rod. Simple enough but the base of each had

to be individually angled to fit tidily against the shape of the deck.

The biggest job on hand was fibreglassing the hull of another handsome old sailboat. Sandrine half joked that I shouldn't look. It will serve to stiffen and seal the timbers but the boat, she says, was "doomed to destruction." Due to a shortage of money, the client had elected to have a cheap repair that was sealing in the worst problems rather than cutting out perished timbers and caulking them in a manner that will move with the expansion and contraction of a ship. In addition, she was covered head to toe in protective clothing as the dust of the resin mixtures is highly toxic. "Traditional woodwork is a noble food for the spirit. Being coated in industrial chemicals is the opposite." Many in the woodworking industry face such dilemmas. The type of work you have to take on is dictated by the market. Who couldn't sympathise – especially with one who worked with 'The Sails of Hope'. [GW](#)



The Japanese saw demonstrated: ripsaw on one cutting edge; cross-cut on the other



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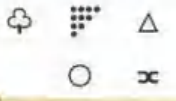
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# Good Woodworking

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## **CARDS ON THE TABLE**

Inspired by a thrift shop find, Glenn Perry makes a table with folding flaps and added decoration, which is ideal for playing cards on. This project also comes with its own A2 pull-out plan!

## **YOUR NAME IN LIGHTS**

Immortalise your first initial in lights, just like Broadway! Sam Hyams shows you how to make this effective project – the perfect lamp for your living room

## **DISCOVER AXMINSTER**

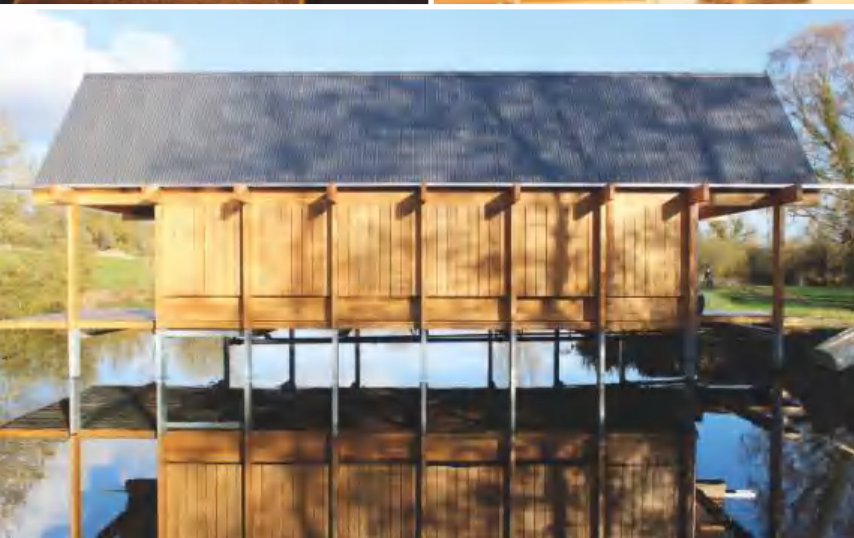
Andy King recently attended Discover Axminster, the first education expo of its kind held at Bridgwater College, which boasted an impressive line-up of leading names in the industry

## **CRÈME DE LA CRÈME**

Back in August, we published the shortlist for the Wood Awards 2015. The winners were finally announced in November after three gruelling months of waiting... we reveal the full list

## **PLUS...**

Michael Huntley considers whether Japanese tools are a 'must-have'; Edward Hopkins makes a setting-out table with his latest apprentice; Les Thorne talks faceplate turning basics; Phil Davy makes and fits an internal door lining from scratch and we find out more about Nick Toye's unique pyrography style







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I cover the teaching of how to handle tools by getting you started on your project and, as you need to use a new piece of equipment, I show you how. This means that the instruction is fresh in your mind and you do the task there and then.

On all courses there will only be a maximum of 4 at a time, this will mean that I will be available when you need help and advice.

### Woodwork Course 2 (Wood and Things)

*This is a continuation of course 1 (tools and things) with the emphases on timber, what are acceptable defects in timber and what isn't, how do you write out a cutting list that means something to your supplier, what to look for when buying wood and what to avoid.*

You will ideally have done course 1 (tools and things) or have a good working knowledge of how to use hand tools and have used hand held power tools.

The projects for you to pick from will be more complicated and will involve the use of the more sophisticated hand tools and hand held power tools and will include using some of the static power tools in the workshop. We will also be looking at buying timber, making cutting lists and drawing plans.

### Woodwork Course 3 (Project Days)

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# Michael's musings



▲ Pic.1 A selection of my measuring devices. Metal rulers are a must



▲ Pic.2 Measuring the gap using two pointed sticks in order to fit a shelf



▲ Pic.3 Checking dimensions on a multi-part frame, diagonals checked and all corners square, then the five-part mid rail can be measured using butted metal rules to extend a 1m rule to 1.6m

## Measurements

Think you know everything there is to know about measuring?  
Think again! **Michael Huntley** tells all here...

Surely there is nothing to muse over about measuring: you get a tape out, hook the end over and read off the length. Well, sort of. I have a whole load of measuring devices that I use for different purposes. What got me thinking about how to use a ruler or tape was a day when a cabinet-frame was being assembled and with it all laid out on the floor of the workshop, I noticed that the lower rail (made by someone else) was 5mm longer than the upper rail. Because of the unusual joint structure it wasn't possible to just lay the two rails side by side and check them. It was also too wide/long for my metre rule that I use for all accurate measurements, (tapes are too variable to use for cabinet-work). So what tools do you need and how do you discipline yourself to arrive at the same measurement twice? I have often heard people commenting on how every time they measure timber, it comes out different.

### Knowing the methods

The first thing is to know the different methods between internal and external measurement.

The simplest and most accurate way to take an internal measurement is to use two pointed sticks and cramp them together, (Pic.2) making sure they are parallel to the floor. I am ignoring 'digital tapes' as I don't have one. If measuring an alcove, do so at several different heights, but what I like to do is cut two 50 x 25mm sticks and wedge them in on either side of the alcove. You can then square them up and check exactly what size truly square cabinet will fit in the undoubtedly non-truly square alcove!

### Metal is better

For external dimensions a flexible tape is fine for rough work but a metal rule is better. Owning two metal rules is better than one because they can be overlapped if you have a cabinet that is 5ft wide, as we did, (Pic.3). I have a 1m rule and a 2ft rule, both metal. Now here I have deliberately introduced what is said to be a sure way of messing up measurements: I have used metric and imperial in the same sentence! Well, as a restorer I have to be able to work on modular pieces made to both

systems. However, it is also an age thing. I trained in 1973, the year of decimalisation. I was brought up with feet and inches but I was quick to realise that for smaller increments, millimetres were much easier to use. So I have been quite happy using a 10mm drill at 16in centres if required.

### Check twice

I am however, very careful to check everything twice and write it down. Too many people rely on a mobile phone to add up dimensions and then have no copy of their workings to go back to when something doesn't fit. Another tip is to avoid parallax error. This occurs when your eye is not vertically over the ruler scale. You can end up reading the adjacent division to the one you want. There is also the issue of needing eye tests, which comes round pretty regularly at my age. I need a special pair of 'bench' glasses as my optician calls them.

Finally, if you want accuracy then buy a Vernier calliper or a kegaki scribing gauge for all small measurements in joint cutting. Both will make a huge difference to your work.

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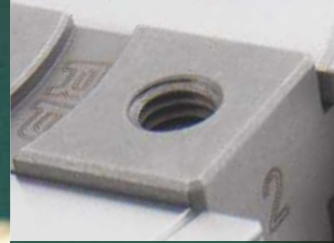
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